



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**PAKISTAN, *MADRASSAS*, AND MILITANCY**

by

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December 2006

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> December 2006	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Pakistan, <i>Madrassas</i> , and Militancy			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Daniel L. Billquist and Jason M. Colbert				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> <p>Following the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the US government has become increasingly concerned with <i>madrassas</i>, Islamic schools of religious education in Central and South Asia. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell denounced these religious seminaries as radical institutions which produce Islamic <i>jihadists</i> capable of threatening U.S. national security and interests.</p> <p>This thesis examines the history and current evidence available on <i>madrassas</i>. Specifically, it analyzes their historical evolution and reaction to domestic, regional and international developments. It finds that there is little evidence to connect <i>madrassas</i> to transnational terrorism, and that they are not a direct threat to the United States. However, Pakistani <i>madrassas</i> do have ties to domestic and regional violence, particularly Sunni-Shia sectarian violence in Pakistan and the Pakistani-Indian conflict in Kashmir, making them a regional security concern. This thesis argues that the best path for combating religious militancy in <i>madrassas</i> is by helping to create better alternatives to <i>madrassa</i> education, including state run and private schools, and not by targeting <i>madrassas</i> directly.</p>				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Pakistan, <i>Madrassa</i> , Militancy, Sectarian Violence, Trans-national Terrorism, Regional Jihad, American Perspective			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 105	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UL	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**PAKISTAN, *MADRASSAS*, AND MILITANCY**

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION OPERATIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the US government has become increasingly concerned with *madrassas*, Islamic schools of religious education in Central and South Asia. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell denounced these religious seminaries as radical institutions which produce Islamic *jihadists* capable of threatening U.S. national security and interests.

This thesis examines the history and current evidence available on *madrassas*. Specifically, it analyzes their historical evolution and reaction to domestic, regional and international developments. It finds that there is little evidence to connect *madrassas* to transnational terrorism, and that they are not a direct threat to the United States. However, Pakistani *madrassas* do have ties to domestic and regional violence, particularly Sunni-Shia sectarian violence in Pakistan and the Pakistani-Indian conflict in Kashmir, making them a regional security concern. This thesis argues that the best path for combating religious militancy in *madrassas* is by helping to create better alternatives to *madrassa* education, including state run and private schools, and not by targeting *madrassas* directly.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The authors would like to thank our families, friends, and colleagues for their support in completion of this project. We would also like to acknowledge the outstanding guidance and support of our thesis advisors and professors. We are also indebted to several South Asian scholars for their support and insight.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. INTRODUCTION

In a memorandum dated 16 October 2003, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld posed the following to his Deputy Defense Secretaries and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Today, we lack the metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists everyday than the *madrassas* and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?<sup>1</sup>

The debate over the possible link between Muslim militancy and Muslim religious schools, which are known as a *madrassa* (this paper will use the common current plural form of *madrassas* in lieu of the correct Arabic plural - *madaris*), actually pre-dates the September 11 attacks. After 9/11, this debate drew more attention as America looked for reasons behind the actions of the nineteen Muslim men involved. Britain began asking similar questions after the July 2005 London subway bombing, when it was announced that three of the suicide bombers recently traveled to Pakistan seeking religious training. No evidence has been uncovered to link any of the 9/11 attackers or London subway bombers to *madrassas* or even any formal Islamic education.<sup>2</sup> Even with the lack of corroborating evidence, politicians in Great Britain and the United States continue to speculate that links exist between Islamic religious schools, *madrassas*, and increased Muslim militancy. The fifth anniversary of 9/11 and the first anniversary of the London subway bombings re-invigorated the discussion, research, debate and study of *madrassa* and Islamic extremism. The interest in this topic has extended beyond politics to include academics, media, and the concerned publics of many Western nations. Given all this political and

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<sup>1</sup> This confidential memorandum written by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was leaked to the news media as was published in its entirety by *USAToday* on 22 October 2003. Retrieved May 23, 2006 from <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/executive/rumsfeld-memo.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> William Dalrymple, "Inside the Madrassa" *New York Review of Books*. 52:19. December 1, 2005. 19.

public scrutiny, the fundamental question still exists: “What role, if any, does attendance at a *madrassa* play in the radicalization of Muslims into Jihadists?”

In the past few years, various attempts have been made to study *madrassas* and their potential Islamist link. At the macro level, the data so far has been rather consistent in refuting the notion that *madrassa* education leads to involvement with global terrorism.<sup>3</sup> To further focus the research on this issue, this thesis focuses on Pakistan due to their large *madrassas* population and assertions of their involvement with militancy. When looking at Pakistan, the data does support the existence of links between *madrassas* and regional and sectarian conflict.<sup>4</sup> The relevance of this connection should not be viewed as a condemnation of the entire Pakistani *madrassa* system, since only a minority of *madrassas* can be conclusively linked to militancy. The majority of *madrassas* in Pakistan serve as a source of religious education and training. It is important though, not to overlook the potential impact on regional and internal security which the militant *madrassas* pose.

Evidence demonstrates *madrassa* attendance preconditions students toward Islamic militancy; however, current data does not support the supposition that *madrassas* are producing global jihadists. The facts lend credence to the argument that some *madrassas* are involved in radicalization, which influences students to become involved with regional and sectarian jihad.

## **B. PURPOSE**

To provide sufficient contextual information on the *madrassa*, sectarianism and Islamic militancy, this paper consists of three distinct sections. The first section, which includes Chapters II and III, is designed to provide the necessary background information on the *madrassa*. Chapter II focuses on defining “*madrassa*” and provides an historical background. It looks at the general

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<sup>3</sup> Marc Sageman. *Understanding Terror Networks*, Princeton University Press, 2004.

Peter Bergan “The Madrassa Scapegoat,” *The Washington Quarterly* 29:2 (Spring 2006), 117.

<sup>4</sup> Ali Riaz. *Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassas in Pakistan*. Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, Singapore, Working Paper No. 85. August 2005.

Saleem Ali. *Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassas of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press. August 2005.



development of the *madrassa* as a center for Islamic learning during the period of classic Islam and discusses how “*madrassa*” is used throughout the Muslim world today. Chapter III examines the paper’s focal point, Pakistan. This chapter describes the diverse Islamic community within Pakistan. It discusses the *madrassa* position and roles within the various Islamic communities. Chapter III also examines the potential impact *madrassas* can have, based on their market share of the Pakistani education system.

The next section, Chapter IV, explores links among sectarianism, militancy and *madrassas* in contemporary Pakistan. This chapter looks at the role the *madrassa* has in sectarianism and militancy. To demonstrate the historical depth of this issue, key events in the history of Pakistan, which served to catalyze sectarianism and militancy, are revealed and discussed. Also covered are events outside Pakistan, which have increased the sectarian division and influenced the rise of militancy within Pakistani *madrassas*. Finally, Islamic militancy in Pakistan is explored and discussed as it relates to militancy at the local sectarian level, regionally and trans-nationally. This serves to clearly delineate known *madrassas* involvement with Islamic militancy at the research defined levels.

The final sections offer a comparative view of *madrassas* as well as actions taken since 9/11 to address concerns. Chapters V and VI examine the differing perspectives of the role, utility and challenges offered by Pakistani *madrassas*. Chapter V examines American perceptions of *madrassas*. Chapter VI provides a summary of findings and looks at an American policy initiative to assist Pakistan with improving its education system. The most common American perspective of Pakistani *madrassas* is characterized by the belief that these schools are widely attended and bent on spreading intolerance and hatred. These assertions culminate in a direct contribution to global terror and terrorism. While these allegations have some merit, they are somewhat overstated and alarmist, leading to a misperception of the true nature of the problem. The Pakistani perception may offer a more relevant and useful examination of the problem with many Pakistani *madrassas*. While no definitive evidence supports

a link from *madrassas* to transnational terrorism, there is ample support that some *madrassas* have contributed to sectarian strife and destabilization in parts of the country. This has concerned both the Musharraf government of Pakistan and the Pakistani population—for many of the same reasons and some quite different ones. However, the majority of *madrassas* do not play a significant role in spreading such discontent, intolerance and violence, and remain an invaluable, if not irreplaceable, asset to the Pakistani population at large.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Concerns over *madrassas*, sectarianism and Islamic militancy in Pakistan should not be taken lightly, especially given Pakistan's nuclear capabilities and its importance to the U.S. efforts in combating transnational terrorism within South Asia. The issue is more nuanced than most U.S. policymakers realize; viewing it as part of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) fails to adequately address the depth and complexity of the issue. From the U.S. GWOT perspective, Pakistani *madrassas* are a very small concern. The bulk of *madrassas* in Pakistan pose no threat to the U.S., its regional interests or the GWOT. Those few that do pose a threat—through active involvement of violence or incitement of violence—need to be monitored and their relationships to other *madrassas* explored. The U.S. should focus on assisting the Pakistani government with its educational system improvements to integrate *madrassas* into the existing system as well as provide a viable alternative in the form of a modern, moderate public education system. From a Pakistani perspective, *madrassas* are important for educational and social reasons, and can not be isolated and/or removed. Improvements in public education, as well as a cooperative *madrassa* reform initiative, offer Pakistan the best opportunity for improvement. Ultimately, education reform is only one of many socio-economic and political improvements that could help reduce sectarianism and other forms of internal chaos that lead to instability and limitations for the future of Pakistan.

## II. WHAT ARE *MADRASSAS*?

### A. WHAT IS A *MADRASSA*?

To fully appreciate the importance of exploring potential links between militancy and religious education, one must develop an understanding of what a *madrassa* are, who attends them, and what they teach. In Arabic, *madrassa* is simply “a place of learning or education.”<sup>5</sup> A more formal definition of *madrassa* describes it as “an educational institution offering instruction in the Islamic subjects including, but not limited to, the *Qu’ran*, the sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and law.”<sup>6</sup> The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* defines *madrassa* as “an establishment of learning where the Islamic sciences are taught ...a college for higher studies.”<sup>7</sup>

Essentially, a *madrassa* is a school but, due to wide dispersion of Muslims, the term can be used to accurately describe several different types of schools. According to Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey,

*Madrassas vary from country to country or even from town to town. They can be a day or boarding school, a school with a general curriculum, or a purely religious school attached to a mosque.*<sup>8</sup>

In some Arab countries, such as Lebanon and Egypt, *madrassa* is a catch-all term to describe all schools regardless of curriculum or affiliation.<sup>9</sup> In Pakistan, India and other South Asian countries, *madrassa* describes religious

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<sup>5</sup> William Dalrymple, “Inside the *Madrassa*” *New York Review of Books*. 52:19. December 1, 2005. 19.

Ali Riaz. *Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassas in Pakistan*. Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, Singapore, Working Paper No. 85. August 2005. p.1 footnote 2.

Saleem Ali. *Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassas of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press. August 2005. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Febes Armanios. *Islamic Schools, Madrasas: background*. CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. October 29, 2003. Retrieved May 23, 2006 from <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RS21654.pdf> 1.

<sup>7</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, John Esposito editor-in-chief, Oxford Press, Vol. 3, 1995, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey, “The *Madrassa* Scapegoat.” *Washington Quarterly*, 29(2), Spring 2006. 119.

<sup>9</sup> Armanios, 2.

seminary schools that provide free education, boarding, and lodging to their students. While lower-income families are more likely to send children to a *madrassa* full time, children from more affluent families also attend *madrassas*, both as full-time resident students and as part-time or day students for Qur'anic lessons and memorization.<sup>10</sup> It is these subtle variations on the basic premise of school that makes it difficult to universally categorize *madrassas* and identify their potential link to militancy.

## **B. EARLY ISLAMIC EDUCATION INFLUENCES AND INSTITUTIONS**

The history of the *madrassa* extends almost to the origins of Islam. Some Islamic scholars suggest the first *madrassa* was established near the Prophet's mosque in Medina after the *hijra* (Arabic for withdraw or emigration). Called *Ahle-Suffa*, it educated the followers of the Prophet about Islam.<sup>11</sup> However, most Islamic scholars contend the *madrassa* evolved in the eleventh century from existing education centers, both religious and secular.

As the Muslim empire expanded beyond Arabia in the seventh century, it entered regions with a history of academic institutions dating back over a thousand years to the Greek and Persian empires.<sup>12</sup> After the Muslims acquired these classical institutions, they began a concerted effort to translate the incredible body of knowledge these institutions contained into Arabic. Using these schools as translation centers, scholars translated a significant number of the ancients into Arabic in less than two hundred years, thereby saving many of these writings for future generations. In addition to preserving knowledge from pre-Islamic empires, these academies also educated Muslim scholars and leaders in the Hellenic and Persian sciences, philosophy and history. Between

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<sup>10</sup> Ali, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>12</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*. KPI Limited, 1987, 129.

translation and study, Islamic scholars were exposed to the scientific and philosophic heritage of these previous empires, which they successfully integrated into Islamic academic endeavors.<sup>13</sup>

From the beginning of Islam, the mosque was recognized as the first and most important institution of Islamic education.<sup>14</sup> The mosque's role as an education center of Islam began during the first century of the *hijra*, but it was during the second century that the mosque was confirmed as the leading institute of Islamic learning. While no set curriculum existed, the education mosques provided was focused on teaching the works of the Prophet and the Arabic language. Arabic studies were particularly important because it was believed that the best way to ensure the purity of Islam was to teach it in its revealed language. Other educational topics of the mosques are described as "different sciences revolving mainly around religious themes."<sup>15</sup> Since most Muslims considered acquisition of knowledge a religious obligation, practically no subject was barred from study within a mosque.<sup>16</sup> It was during this period that another center of Islamic learning was also development: the *kuttab*.

The *kuttab* served as the elementary education institution in the Muslim world. The *kuttab* (plural, *katatib*) actually existed in pre-Islamic Arabia but during the second century of the *hijra* it became widespread due to its role as a center for basic Islamic education.<sup>17</sup> *Katatib* proved important during the *Arabization* of the new Muslim empire because it focused on teaching Arabic and the *Qur'an*. *Katatib* varied across the Muslim world, in some areas *katatib* taught arithmetic as well as reading, writing and the *Qur'an*. In general, most *katatib* focused entirely on the *Qur'an*. Students are taught to read and recite portions, if not all, of the *Qur'an*, as well some writing skills by copying passages.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Nasr, 130.

<sup>14</sup> Hisham Nashabe. *Muslim Education Institutions*. Library of Lebannon, 1989, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 30.

After three and half centuries of conquest, expansion and colonization, the Muslim empire stretched from the Iberian Peninsula down through North Africa and across Arabia to Persia and the Indian Sub-continent. To assist in maintaining this empire, Muslim leaders declared Arabic as the official language of the empire. Since many regions of the Muslim Empire were not Arab lands and had no tradition of Arabic language or culture, it became necessary to the transplant Arabic to the frontiers of the empire. Traditional Arab Muslims worried that exposure to the languages and cultures of non-Arab regions of the Islamic Empire would contaminate and weaken Islam and the Arabic language. As a method to ensure preservation of the purity of the faith and language of Islam, Muslim leaders began *Arabization*, an official program designed to ensure and maintain the purity of both Islam and Arabic. Anzar describes this interaction between the Arab Muslim and the non-Arab potential Muslim as resulting in the creation of

...a cadre of Muslim experts who would develop sophisticated writings and textbooks on *Fiqh* – Islamic jurisprudence, *Sunna* – Prophet's traditions, *Hadith* – Prophet's sayings, and *Tafseer* – the interpretation of the *Qur'an*, to cater to the needs of non-Arab Muslim populations. Thus began the tradition of *Madrassa*, the center for higher learning the initial purpose of which was to preserve religious conformity through uniform teachings of Islam for all.<sup>19</sup>

One of the first Islamic schools of higher learning outside a mosque was founded in Egypt in the eleventh century A.D. Considered by many scholars as the first *madrassa*, *Dar al-'Ilm*, House of Science, was established in 1005 A.D., by the Fatimid Caliph, al-Hakim, to teach and propagate the Shi'ite version of Islam.<sup>20</sup> *Dar al-'Ilm* did not limit instruction to just religious sciences. It taught many secular subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and

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<sup>19</sup> Uzma Anzar. *Islamic Education: a brief history of madrassa with comments on curricula and current pedagogical practices*. Retrieved May 23, 2006 from <http://www.uvm.edu/~envprog/madrassah/resources.html>. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Philip Hitti. *History of the Arabs*. MacMillian Co. 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1951, 628. The Fatimid Caliphs, 909 to 1171 A.D., were the only Shi'ite rulers of Egypt.

architecture.<sup>21</sup> The *Dar al-'Ilm* functioned much like a modern school with a teacher appointed to teach each subject and possessed a fairly extensive library. According to an inventory taken in 1045, the library consisted of 6,500 volumes in subjects ranging from religious texts to works supporting the secular subjects taught at the schools.<sup>22</sup> Unlike mosques, which served as both a place of worship and education, *Dar al-'Ilm* distinguished itself by focusing on strictly academic activities.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the unique education program at *Dar al-'Ilm* ended only a few years after its founding when the Fatimid Caliph, al-Hakim, took control and used the institution to propagate his extreme views of Shi'ite doctrine.<sup>24</sup> After the Sunni conquest of Egypt, the Shi'i texts were purged from the library at *Dar al-'Ilm*. Most of the library's secular texts were preserved and many were transported to the great libraries of Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> *Dar al-'Ilm* ceased to exist in the early twelfth century, after it was closed for heretical teachings by the Sunni rulers of Egypt.<sup>26</sup>

### C. THE MADRASSAS' RISE AND DECLINE

Between 1065 and 1067 A.D., Nizam-ul-Mulk Hassan Bin Al-Tusi, a Seljuk Vizier to the Saljuq Sultans Alp Arslan and Malikshah, established in Baghdad what is recognized as the first organized *madrassa*, the *Nizamiyah*.<sup>27</sup> Consecrated as a theological seminary; its stated purpose was to teach

...scholastic theology to produce spiritual leaders, and earthly knowledge to produce government servants who would be appointed in various countries and the regions of the Islamic empire.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ali, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmed Munir, "Islamic Education Prior to the Establishment of *Madrassa*," Journal of Islamic Studies, 1987 cited by Anzar in *Islamic Education: a brief history of madrassa with comments on curricula and current pedagogical practices*. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Nashabe, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Hitti, 628.

<sup>25</sup> Ali, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Hitti, 628.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 410

<sup>28</sup> Anzar, 3.

The *Nizamiyah* differed from other education institutions in that it was created, endowed and controlled by the rulers of the empire. The caliph confirmed the appointment of instructors and approved the curriculum.<sup>29</sup> Unlike mosques, which were funded by donations, *madrassas* received funding through “the system of state patronage under the institution of *waaf* (or trust) through which the schools were financially supported.”<sup>30</sup> From the *waaf*, the *madrassa* received operating funds, teacher salaries and student stipends. This economic reliance on state patronage provided a lever with which the state could exert influence and control over the *madrassa*. Still, this first *madrassa* proved remarkably capable of achieving its mandate of providing religious scholars, jurists and civil servants. This led Nizam-ul-Mulk to establish other *madrassas* in Naysabur and towns throughout the Islamic empire as a method of further extending yjr influence and control of the caliph.<sup>31</sup>

The connection between religious knowledge and law became important as Sunni rulers used Islam to exert control over their subjects through religious conformity and dogma. In the December 2002 issue of *Foreign Policy*, Pakistani scholar Husain Haqqani describes Nizam-ul Mulk’s *madrassas* as “...intended to create a class of ulema, muftis, and *qadis* (judges) who would administer the Muslim empire, legitimize its rulers as righteous, and define an unalterable version of Islam.”<sup>32</sup> The success of Nizam-ul-Mulk’s schools in producing leaders for the Islamic empire led to his recognition as the “Father of the Islamic public education system.”<sup>33</sup>

For the next several hundred years, Islamic educational institutions, *madrassas*, mosques and Muslim universities would achieve many great accomplishments. While maintaining a firm religious base, *madrassas* from Andalusia (the southern region of Spain), to the Indian Sub-Continent would train

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<sup>29</sup> Hitti, 410. Nashabe, 23-24.

<sup>30</sup> A. H. Nayyar. “Madrasah Education – Frozen in Time” in *Education and the State; Fifty Years of Pakistan*. edited by Pervez Hoodbhoy, Oxford Press. 1998, 218.

<sup>31</sup> Hitti, 412.

<sup>32</sup> Hussain Haqqani. “Islam’s Medieval Outposts.” *Foreign Policy*, 133:58 November-December 2002, 61.

<sup>33</sup> Ali, 16.



many great thinkers in science, math, philosophy and medicine. These institutions would also preserve the knowledge and works of the great classical empires of Greece, Rome, Persia and Gallic Spain. *Madrassas* were especially known for the concept of independent reasoning or *Ijtihad* during this period.<sup>34</sup> This Golden Age of Islamic knowledge paralleled the European period of the Dark Ages, with its corresponding ignorance, brutality and intolerance.

As history repeatedly demonstrates, Golden Ages only lasts so long. The Islamic Golden Age suffered a slow decline and eventual collapse, through the combination of military and economic expenditures required to defeat the European Crusades, the eventual loss of Andalusia Spain, internal Islamic political strife, and the coming of the European Renaissance. These events resulted in Muslim leadership and scholarship sliding into a “state of decay, from which, unfortunately, it has not bounced back.”<sup>35</sup> This social and intellectual deterioration resulted in a period of introspection in which Muslim scholars and clergy questioned the very ideas which allowed them to achieve so much in the secular fields of knowledge such as mathematics and science.

The defeat and the humiliation faced by the Muslims in terms of both the loss of material wealth and power and spiritual integrity, resulted in the Muslim *Ulema* (literally meaning the scholar) of the later days to shun any pursuit of worldly knowledge and go back to the basics. In other words, they closed the door to *Ijtihad* – independent reasoning. .... There was depression, lamentation and nostalgia for the lost glorious days. In this state of total gloominess Muslim *Ulema*, slowly gained power by becoming the spiritual advisors and deliverers of whatever was left of the education and the political systems. These murky times in the Muslim history had profound impact on the function and philosophy of the *Madrassas* all over the Muslim world. Many abandoned the pursuit of rational sciences and focused exclusively on the teachings of Islam as prescribed in the *Qur'an*. *Ulema* used the verses from the *Qur'an* to

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<sup>34</sup> Maria Rosa Menocal. *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Christians and Jews created a culture of tolerance in mediaeval Spain*. Boston MA; Little Brown and Company 2002, in *Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassas of Pakistan*. by Saleem Ali, Oxford University Press. August 2005. 16-17.

<sup>35</sup> Anzar, 4.

rationalize their stance that the earthly or rational knowledge either should not be taught in *Madrasahs* or should only be studied in the light of the *Qur'an*, which for them had all the answers.<sup>36</sup>

As the influence of the Muslim empire declined, religious leaders decided education on subjects that exceeded religiously justifiable needs was no longer necessary. In the eleventh century A.D., Islamic scholars began arguing that *madrasah* education should only focus on the 'transmitted' (*naqli*) sciences because they are sacred, absolute and beyond questioning and rationalization.<sup>37</sup> This adherence to the *Qur'an*, and the lack of rational or independent reasoning, continues to dominate the curriculum of many *madrasahs* today.

European colonization of Muslim lands during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in further decline in Islamic education. The implementation of European secular education systems and separation of religion and civil governance served to alienate Muslims in their own countries.<sup>38</sup> Access to secular education was not universal under colonial rule, which resulted in a "dichotomy of the education system—secular education for the elite and religious education for the poor."<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the idea of a government that didn't require religious approval to be legitimate further undermined the importance of Muslim law and Muslim rulers.

*Madrasahs* responded in several ways to the perceived loss of Islamic identity and sought to diminish the social and cultural impact of their colonizers. On the Indian Sub-Continent, many *madrasahs* removed all secular and earthly subjects from their curriculum to focus solely on Islamic religious education in order to counter the influence of British colonialism.<sup>40</sup> As a whole, the *madrasahs* of the Islamic education system in the Arab world did not follow the example of their Indian brothers.

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<sup>36</sup> Anzar, 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> Talbani, 69.

<sup>38</sup> Haqqani, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Anzar, 5.

<sup>40</sup> International Crisis Group. *Pakistan: Madrasahs, Extremism and the Military*. ICG Asia Report No. 36, July 2002, 5.

#### D. MADRASSA CURRICULUM

Once their importance as educational institutions was recognized, the *madrassa* “gradually became the source through which all forms of knowledge were legitimized.”<sup>41</sup> As a result of this, many *madrassas* divided their curriculum into two areas of instruction; the transmitted sciences (*naqli*) and the intellectual sciences (*‘aqli*).<sup>42</sup> The transmitted sciences focused on teaching revealed knowledge of religious science, jurisprudence and divine law. Since revealed knowledge was only given to a chosen few, it was to be learned without questioning or rationalization in order to maintain its purity. These studies dominated most *madrassa* curriculum since mastery of all associated disciplines was required to garner religious knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

The intellectual sciences included logic, mathematics, natural sciences and philosophy. Many Muslim thinkers argued these subjects could be learned by human intelligence and were not required to be “transmitted” to students as if they were religious subjects.<sup>44</sup> Initially, most *madrassas* taught both “intellectual” and “transmitted” science. By the fourteenth century, *madrassas* in the Arab world discontinued teaching intellectual sciences. In other areas of the Muslim world, such as Persia, Turkey and South Asia, instruction of intellectual sciences in *madrassas* continued until the nineteenth century A.D., when colonial powers began to establish rival secular schools.<sup>45</sup>

While Islamic scholars argued the elements of the *madrassas*’ curriculum, the supporters of *madrassas* also weighed in on the content of *madrassa* teachings. Muslim rulers, who supported *madrassas* through endowments, sought to use *madrassas* to propagate state ideology and as tools of social control.<sup>46</sup> To accomplish this, Muslim rulers directly and indirectly influenced *madrassa* curriculums to eliminate free thinking and focus *madrassa* teaching on

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<sup>41</sup> Talbani, 68.

<sup>42</sup> Talbani, 69.

<sup>43</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*. KPI Limited, 1987, 126.

<sup>44</sup> S.H. Nasr, 126.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>46</sup> Talbani, 71.

subjects that instilled discipline and obedience. By determining which *madrassas* received funding, who was allowed to teach, and what was allowed to be taught, the state exerted direct control over the *madrassas*. This control allowed the state to directly influence the *ulama* and, indirectly, the masses.<sup>47</sup> Thus the debate over what to teach in *madrassas* had both political and religious implications.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The first Islamic education formerly called a *madrassa* was founded in Baghdad four hundred years after the origin of Islam. While it shared an academic heritage with the secular and religious schools of the day, its relationship to the official power structure set it apart. The *madrassa* was never designed to supplant the mosques as the primary source of religious education for Muslims.

With the establishment of the *Nizamiyah madrassa* and its formalized organization, *madrassas* were designed to serve as supplemental educational institutions to Mosque schools, albeit with a specific purpose. The state's role in *madrassa* funding differed greatly from mosque schools, which were supported by donation and contributions. Dependence on the state for funding and approval of instructors and curriculum, allowed the state a degree of control over the *madrassa* they could not achieve over the Mosque and the Mosque schools. The state used its influence to force the *madrassas* to assist it in maintaining the status quo. This resulted in *madrassas* turning from centers of education, to centers for perpetuating dogma and tradition.

As external pressure and internal strife weakened the Muslim power structure, *madrassa* became the guardians of religious knowledge, with little time for research or inquiry on non-essential religious or secular subjects. As modern Islamic scholar A. H. Nayyar states, "Once an impressive system of educations

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<sup>47</sup> Talbani.

which had produced the towering intellectuals in Islamic civilization, the scope of *madrassa* education has been progressively reduced to mere preservation of specific doctrines.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Nayyar, 216.

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### III. PAKISTAN AS THE FOCAL POINT

#### A. INTRODUCTION

As a case study in response to the “thought process” behind Secretary Rumsfeld’s 16 October 2003 memorandum, in which he cited *madrassas* as a source of Islamic extremist, this chapter focuses on Pakistan and its Islamic centers of education, specifically its *madrassas*. It is important to focus on these *madrassas* for three reasons: first, is the large number of *madrassas* in Pakistan and their tremendous growth over the past 25 years; second, the implications that attendees of Pakistani *madrassas* have participated in internal sectarian violence, are involved directly and/or indirectly in violent activities in neighboring Afghanistan and India, and are suspected of participating in transnational terrorism; and finally, the important role Pakistan plays in U.S. foreign policy, both geographically in Central Asia and psychologically within the Muslim world.

This chapter examines the relationship between the nation of Pakistan and its *madrassas*. To fully grasp the complexity of Pakistan, the chapter looks at the various, and many times overlapping, identities that make up Pakistan. It then looks at the role of *madrassas* within Pakistan. It discusses *madrassas*’ place with the education system, their enrollment numbers, student backgrounds and curriculum.

#### B. PAKISTAN: A LAND OF COMPETING IDENTITIES

The role *madrassas* play in Pakistan must be contained in an understanding of what Pakistan is and how Islam exists there.

The name *Pakistan* is actually an anagram proposed by Indian Muslim students at Cambridge in the early 1930s, which is composed of letters from predominantly Muslim regions of colonial India.<sup>49</sup> These students proposed the name in a plan to develop a federation of Muslim states from Indian provinces

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<sup>49</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot. “Introduction” to *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*. Christophe Jaffrelot editor, Zed Books, 2002. p. 12. Chaudhri Rehmat Ali is credited with creating the anagram in 1933. In the anagram, ‘P’ stood for Punjab, ‘A’ stood for Afghan – actually the Pathans of the North West Frontier Province, ‘K’ stand for Kashmir, ‘S’ if the Sindh, and ‘TAN’ for Baluchistan. Bengal, latter to be called East Pakistan and then Bangladesh after securing its independence in 1971, was not part of this proposed Muslim state.

with a Muslim majority.<sup>50</sup> Also in the 1930s, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, a Bombay lawyer and future *father* of Pakistan, began articulating the theory that Indian society was actually two separate ethno-religious nations, one Hindu and the other Muslim. This “Two-nation” theory proposed that upon independence from Great Britain, India should be divided into a Hindu state and a Muslim state in recognition of the dichotomy of India.<sup>51</sup> Jinnah was able to use this theory as a rallying point for Indian Muslims to demand an independent Muslim state as part of the greater independence movement; unfortunately he was not able to translate the idea of a Muslim state into a practical working concept due in large part to the diversity of India’s Muslim community.<sup>52</sup>

Pakistan was partitioned from India in 1947, at the end of British Colonial rule, as an independent Muslim state. Originally, Pakistan consisted of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, geographically separated by India. These two regions differed ethnically, linguistically and culturally. They had little in common beyond Islam and British colonialism. These commonalities proved unable to overcome the social and cultural differences between East and West Pakistan. In 1971, after twenty years of struggle to develop one nation out of two isolated enclaves, Pakistan experienced a civil war in which East Pakistan, with support from India, won its independence and formed Bangladesh. The loss of East Pakistan demonstrated the pitfall of using religion as a common unifying factor for a national identity. This is especially true when one considers the lack of homogeneity in Pakistan’s Muslim community.

In Pakistan, ethnic, tribal and linguist affiliations strongly influence both personal and group identity. Pakistani society is divided into five ethnic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun (Pathan), Baluch, and Muhajir.<sup>53</sup> The first four groups are associated with a particular region of Pakistan, which constitutes their ethnic homeland and usually functions as a province of the government. The Muhajir

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<sup>50</sup> Stephen Cohen. *The Idea of Pakistan*. The Brookings Institution. 2004. 27.

<sup>51</sup> Cohen. *The Idea of Pakistan*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>53</sup> Central Intelligence Agency. *World Fact Book, Pakistan*. Updated October 17, 2006. Retrieved November 3, 2006 from <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pk.html>.



were Muslims who emigrated from India in 1947 at the time of Partition and their descendants. Muhajir tended to congregate in urban centers such as Karachi, where they replaced the Hindu professionals, civil servant and traders who moved to Indian-controlled areas as a result of Partition.<sup>54</sup> Pakistan's is also multi-linguist society that lacks a common national language, which only adds to the complexity. Layered over this ethnically and linguistically diverse society is a complex, multilayered Islamic landscape that is "...far too complex to be reduced to a simple binary division since there are a multitude of Sunni and Shia sub-sects, local cultural variants and cults, and rival religious traditions differences influence sectarianism, religious divides within Pakistan."<sup>55</sup> With all of the factors that shape individual and group identity, both secular and religious, it is easy to see why Pakistan has had such a difficult time developing a unique, collective national identity centered on Islam.

### **C. ISLAMIC DIVISION OF PAKISTAN**

The CIA's *World Fact Book* reports that 97 percent of Pakistan's estimated 165 million people are Muslims. Pakistan's Muslims are divided between the Sunni majority, which are about 77 percent of the population, and the Shia minority, at about 2 percent of the total population.<sup>56</sup> This division of Islam is further defused as the Sunni community is divided into two main sub-sects, Deobandi and Bareilvi, the minor sub-sect Ahle-Hadith/Salafi, as well as the supra-sect political organization Jamat-e-Islami.<sup>57</sup> The Shi's community also lacks homogeny and is divided into the *Athna-Ashri* and *Ismaili* sub-sects. Additionally, *Sufi* and several smaller Islamic sects make up Pakistan's Muslim community. This lack of homogeny within the Muslim community reinforces the existing ethnic, linguistic and cultural divisions of Pakistan's society.

#### **1. Sunni Divisions within Pakistan**

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<sup>54</sup> Jaffrelot, 16.

<sup>55</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG). *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*. Asia Report No.95. April 2005. 1

<sup>56</sup> CIA. *World Fact Book, Pakistan*.

<sup>57</sup> Tariq Rahman. "Madrassa and the state of Pakistan." *Himal*, February 2004. Retrieved May 23, 2006 <http://www.himalmag.com/2004/february/essay.htm>, 3.

The Deobandi trace their origin to Islamic revivalism from the town of Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, India.<sup>58</sup> This movement is embodied in *Dar-ul-Ulum*, the Deoband *Madrassa*, which was founded by Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi in 1867.<sup>59</sup> The purpose of this movement and the *madrassa* was to counter the influence of Islamic leaders who favored European-style education and desired closer ties with British colonialists.<sup>60</sup> In addition to refuting efforts to liberalize or modernize Islam, Deobandis are also known for their opposition to *Sufi* and its accompanying mythic beliefs and rituals. Deobandis do not oppose mysticism altogether but did argue that adherence to the Islamic law (*Sharia*) was the path to mystical exaltation.<sup>61</sup> Deobandi schools comprise a bulk of the Sunni *madrassas* found along the Afghan-Pakistan border and are also found in most of the larger cities.<sup>62</sup> The Deobandi are considered the most conservative of Pakistan's Sunni sub-sects as well as the most anti-Western.<sup>63</sup> One of Pakistan's larger religio-political parties, *Jamaat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam* (JUI), is recognized as a Deobandi sectarian organization.<sup>64</sup>

The Barelvis sect is the next major Sunni sub-sect within Pakistan. Ahmed Raza Khan of Bareilly founded this sub-sect of Sunni Islam in 1906 as a reaction to the austerity and conservatism of the Deobandi. The Barelvi support the belief that saints can intercede on behalf of God.<sup>65</sup> This support of Sufism and mysticism is contrary to the puritanical beliefs of the Deobandi. Because of

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<sup>58</sup> Saleem Ali. *Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassas of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press. August 2005. 37.

<sup>59</sup> Rahman, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ali Riaz. *Global Jihad, Sectarianism and the Madrassas in Pakistan*. Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, Singapore, Working Paper No. 85. August 2005. 13.

<sup>61</sup> Rahman, 3.

<sup>62</sup> S.V.R. Nasr "Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy," *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*. Edited by Christophe Jaffrelot, Zed Books 2002. 91.

<sup>63</sup> Uzma Anzar. *Islamic Education: a brief history of madrassa with comments on curricula and current pedagogical practices*. Retrieved 23 May 2006 from <http://www.uvm.edu/~envprog/madrassah/resources.html> . 15.

<sup>64</sup> Mohammad Amir Rana. *Gateway to Terrorism*. New Millennium, 2003. 126.

<sup>65</sup> Ali, 38.

this, the Barelvi are considered the defenders of *Sufi* Islam.<sup>66</sup> This veneration of saints leads to condemnation by the Deobandi and the Salafi religious leaders, as well as comparison of the Barelvi beliefs to those of Shi'as Muslims.<sup>67</sup> *Jamiaat-e-Ulamma-Pakistan* (JUP) is the religious political party linked to the Barelvi.<sup>68</sup>

The *Ahl-e-Hadith/Salafi* is one of the smaller Sunni sub-sects within Pakistan. *Ahle-Hadith* is the most puritanical Sunni sect and was founded by Sayyed Ahmed Barelvi in the early nineteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Closely linked to the teachings of Arabian thinker Muhammad bin Wahhab, the *Ahle-Hadith* are often called Wahabbi in South Asia. Like the Deobandi, *Ahle-Hadith* shuns the veneration of saints and shrines. Unlike the other Sunni sect of Pakistan, *Ahle-Hadith* do not subscribe to any of the four recognized schools of Islamic jurisprudence and are considered non-conformist by their fellow Sunni Muslims. *Ahle-Hadith* beliefs focus on the teachings of the *Qur'an* and the Hadith and oppose most folk or *Sulfi* Islamic practices.<sup>70</sup> *Ahle-Hadith* is linked to the largest jihadi group in Pakistan, *Jamaat-Dawah*, formerly known as *Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*, and founded in 1986 in response to the war in Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> Although believed to be principally Pakistani, this group has been linked to terrorist attacks in Kashmir and India.<sup>72</sup> The *Jamaat-Dawah* leadership continues to believe both physical and intellectual Jihad must be waged against *batil*, injustice or falsehood. Additionally, the *Ahle-Hadith* is known to have links with Saudi

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<sup>66</sup> Riaz, 13.

<sup>67</sup> Ali, 39.

<sup>68</sup> Rana, 377.

<sup>69</sup> Suroosh Irfani. "Pakistan's Sectarian Violence: Between the "Arabist Shift" and Indo-Persian Culture." *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*. Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. 2004. 152.

<sup>70</sup> Rahman, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Rana, 331-333.

<sup>72</sup> Ali, 40.

organizations including the Harmain Islamic Foundation, which is believed to have provided funding and other resources, possibly resulting in increased political power.<sup>73</sup>

## **2. Shi'ia Division within Pakistan**

While the majority of Pakistan aligns with one of the Sunni sects, 20 percent of Pakistanis are Shi'a Muslims. Historically concentrated in Southern Punjab and Sindh, the believers have also concentrated in Karachi and have a strong presence in the Hunza Valley of northern Pakistan. Shi'as of Pakistan are further divided into two sub-sects. The majority of Shi'a belong to the *Athna-Ashri* sub-sect, which traces authority in Islam through bloodline of the Prophet Muhammad and believes that there have been twelve Imams since the time of the Prophet.; the Twelfth Imam is believed to be in hiding and will return to usher in the end of history. This is the dominant strain of Shi'ism as found in Iran, Iraq and around the Persian Gulf, as well as Lebanon. The small sub-sect reveres the first six of these Imams; they are known as the *Ismailis* or Severners. Most of them recognize the Agha Khan as the current legitimate Imam of Islam.<sup>74</sup>

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Shi'a of Pakistan have experienced a reawakening. The renewed emphasis of Shi'a Islam led to increased sectarian identification. as well as a desire for increased political participation. Iran has overtly supported Pakistan's Shi'a since the early 1980s through funding of cultural centers, *madrassas* and contributions to Shi'a political organizations. The Pakistani Shi'a have used this increased political activism and external support to ensure the government doesn't take measures to strip them of their rights. The Shi'a are cognizant of the example the Bhutto government made in 1973 when it declared the Ahmadiyyas sect non-Muslim and stripped them of their Pakistani citizenship.<sup>75</sup> To counter this possibility, the

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<sup>73</sup> Rahman, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ali, 41.

<sup>75</sup> Riaz, 16.

Shi'a formed *Tahreek Nifaz Fiqh Ja'fariya* (the name was later changed to *Tahreek-e Ja'Fariya, Pakistan or TIJ*) in 1979 to meet the demands of a changing political arena in which the Shi'a desired the ability to shape their destiny.<sup>76</sup>

Through TIJ, the Shi'a were able to successfully confront policies of the General Zia-ul Huq regime. These small political victories led to increased assertiveness of the Shi'a community. This eventually led to the demand for a separate state of "Karakoram" in the mid-1980s.<sup>77</sup> The demand for separate recognition has increased the historic sectarian tension between Sunni and Shi'a in Pakistan, especially as the government has covertly supported the Sunni organization to suppress Shi'a separatist movements.<sup>78</sup> The TIJ proved an effective political vehicle for Shi'a initiatives throughout the 1980s and 1990s; however, in the 1990s, it split in response to increased Sunni-Shi'a violence. In 2002, TIJ was renamed *Tehrik-i-Islami* after President Musharif issued a directive banning it and five other sectarian organizations.<sup>79</sup>

### **3. *Jamat-i-Islami***

Another element of importance in Pakistan is *Jamat-i-Islami*. Founded by prominent Islamic thinker Abdul ala Mawdudi, *Jamat-i-Islami* is a revivalist, modernist movement and political party made up primarily of Sunni Muslims who shuns sectarian tags.<sup>80</sup> While Mawdudi was known for his anti-Western thinking and writings, he stressed the need to modernize Islamic education in order to better utilize technology and other Western concepts that could empower Muslims. *Jamat-i-Islami* focuses on refuting Western culture and intellectual domination, combining traditional Islamic beliefs with the study of history, politics and economics in order to prepare its followers to confront Western ideas.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Rana, 439, 449.

<sup>77</sup> Ali, 41.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>79</sup> ICG, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*. 3.

<sup>80</sup> International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military*. Asia Report 36. 2002. 1

<sup>81</sup> Rahman, 3.

While *Jamat-i-Islami* is considered a political organization, it is much more; it seeks to be a “community” of Muslims who have risen above sectarianism to serve as the “vanguard” of the Islamic revolution in Pakistan.<sup>82</sup>

#### **D. MADRASSAS OF PAKISTAN**

The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* defines *madrassas* as “an education center where Islamic sciences are taught”<sup>83</sup>. This paper defines a *madrassa* as a school that follows a structured curriculum of Islamic subjects designed to prepare its graduates for positions as Islamic clergy or jurists. This definition oversimplifies the *madrassa* and its role, especially in a multi-sect Muslim country such as Pakistan. It is important to make this distinction because in Pakistan it is common to come across a similar but more elementary center of Islamic learning: the *maktab*. *Maktab* are informally run schools “devoted only to reading, recitation and learning of the Qur’an by heart with a view to enable the common man to perform daily or regular religious duties.”<sup>84</sup> This simple definition clearly delineates the difference between a *madrassa*’s higher level of religious education and a *maktab* focus on religious training.

For several reasons, Pakistan has been the subject of much debate concerning *madrassas*. One reason for the focus on Pakistan is the rapid growth of *madrassas*. Between 1979 and 2003, the number of *madrassas* rose from 1,745 to somewhere between 7,000<sup>85</sup> and 10,000<sup>86</sup>. Even with the lack of consensus on the total number of *madrassas*, this dynamic growth still attracted the attention of those trying to determine the correlation between *madrassas* and militancy.

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<sup>82</sup> Cohen, 165.

S.V.R. Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: the Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*. I.B. Taurus, 1994, 21.

<sup>83</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, John Esposito editor-in-chief, Oxford Press, Vol., 3, 1995, 13.

<sup>84</sup> Khalid Rahman & Syed Rashad Bukhari. “Pakistan: Religious Education and Institutions” *The Muslim World*. 2006 325.

<sup>85</sup> Riaz, 12.

<sup>86</sup> Armanios, 4.

## 1. ***Madrassas and the Pakistani Education System***

It is important to place the growth of *madrassas* within the context of Pakistan's education system. The Pakistani education system consists of four elements: public schools, private secular schools, *awqaf* or mosque schools, and *madrassas*.<sup>87</sup>

Begun in the 1980s, the mosque schools or *awqaf* are an attempt by the Pakistani government to extend education to remote and outlying areas. The idea was to combine basic secular education in Urdu with the religious instruction already being conducted at most mosques.<sup>88</sup> The Pakistani Government provides funding and curriculum for these mosques' schools. The major weakness of this program is that many of the *imams* lack the formal education necessary to teach the secular subjects.<sup>89</sup> The Pakistani Government agency responsible for administering religious charitable trusts oversees the *awqafs* and has enacted a program to hire part-time teachers to assist *imams* with instruction in the government-mandated secular subjects.<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, after almost twenty years of existence, little empirical information is available as to the effectiveness of the *awqaf*.<sup>91</sup>

The final element of the Pakistan education system is the *madrassas*. There are two primary distinguishing differences between *awqaf* and *madrassas*. First, *madrassas* receive the majority of their funding from sources other than the government, unlike their historical precedence in eleventh century Baghdad.<sup>92</sup> Most resources are supplied to the *madrassas* by their affiliated religious sect

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<sup>87</sup> Public schools and private secular schools follow essentially the same state-defined curriculum which includes some required Islamic education. The primary difference between public and private schools is in their source of funding. Public schools receive their financial support primarily from the government with some funding derived from student tuition. Private schools are funded almost entirely through student tuition and donations. Typically, private schools provide a higher quality and more modern education than state sponsored public schools.

<sup>88</sup> Anzar, 5.

<sup>89</sup> USAID. *Strengthening Education in the Muslim World*. PPC Issue Working Paper No.1. 2004. 49.

<sup>90</sup> Ali. 13.

<sup>91</sup> Anzar. 14.

<sup>92</sup> Rahman and Bukhari, 333.

and the sect's external supporters. Acceptance of government resources is voluntary and many *madrassas* do not seek government support. Typically, government support to *madrassas* comes in the form of land grants.<sup>93</sup> Recently, the government has begun to offer incentives of money, books and supplies, and technology to *madrassas* that participate in the renewed voluntary *madrassa* registration campaign.<sup>94</sup>

The second major difference is the lack of government oversight: the *madrassas'* curriculum, operation and resourcing are not subject to government inspection or interference. In the mid-1970s, following Pakistan's civil war and the creation of Bangladesh, Bhutto nationalized education but left the *madrassas* free of government control in order to consolidate support from the various Islamic factions.<sup>95</sup> Unlike awqaf schools, *madrassas* are not required to teach the government-mandated secular subjects. The *madrassa's* curriculum typically focuses heavily on learning Islamic subjects in Arabic or Persian. Many *madrassas* teach a variety of secular subjects, but this instruction is usually couched in the idea that this learning is to help expand the reach of Islam.

## **2. School Enrollment in Pakistan**

The lack of a comprehensive census of education institutions in Pakistan results in a high degree of uncertainty as to the impact of each element. The *Education and School Atlas of Pakistan*, a 2002 UNICEF report, estimated that enrollment the Pakistani national education system consisted of about 23.5 million students ages 5 to 19. Public school enrollment was approximately 16 million children in 150,000 public schools. Private secular schools accounted for 6 million students in 35,000. Finally, there were an estimated 1.5 million students

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<sup>93</sup> Ali, 96.

<sup>94</sup> K. Alan Kronstadt, "Education Reform in Pakistan" *CRS report for Congress*. RS22009, December 2004.

<sup>95</sup> Ali, 29.



enrolled in 25,000 *awqaf schools*.<sup>96</sup> It is also important to note that Pakistan's student enrollment constitutes less than half, approximately 42 percent, of the eligible population of children ages 5 to 19.<sup>97</sup>

The estimates of the number of *madrassas* and students cover a large range. At the high end, a Brookings Institute paper estimated Pakistan has some 45,000 *madrassas*<sup>98</sup> but was unable to validate this data or provide an estimated student population.<sup>99</sup> A more commonly recognized and quoted figure of Pakistani *madrassas* and their enrollment are from a 2002 report by International Crisis Group (ICG) which estimated 10,000 *madrassas* with an estimated enrollment of 1.5 million students.<sup>100</sup> Since the report's release, other researchers have identified errors in ICG's enrollment number.<sup>101</sup> Andrabi and his associates argue that the ICG report may overstate enrollment numbers by as much as a factor of 10. By contrast, Andrabi's best estimates indicate *madrassa* enrollment during the same periods as between 410,000 and 475,000 or about 3 percent of total school enrollment.<sup>102</sup> The incongruity among sources and reported data on the number of *madrassas* and their enrollment only serves to confuse the issue even more.

Other researchers see the problem of establishing a credible census on the number of *madrassas* in Pakistan as more than conflicting data. Christine Fair, a South Asian expert at the U.S. Institute for Peace, argues that four conditions exist to exacerbate the issue of determining the number of *madrassas* in Pakistan to the point of near impossibility.

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<sup>96</sup> Ali, 22.

<sup>97</sup> Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, & Tristan Zajonc. *Religious School Enrollment in Pakistan: A look at the data.* KSG RWP 05-024, 2005. 4.

<sup>98</sup> P.W. Singer. *Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a system of education not Jihad.* Brookings Institute Analysis Paper 14. 2001. 2

<sup>99</sup> Andrabi, et al., 7.

<sup>100</sup> ICG *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military.* 2.

<sup>101</sup> Riaz. 11.

<sup>102</sup> Andrabi, et al., 12 and 14.

First, many popular media reports likely have conflated *madrassas* with *maktab* and may be dramatically overestimating *madrassas* numbers. Second, there is no extant central database of registered *madaris*. Registration happens at the district [level], and those documents are all in hardcopy filed with local governments. Third, it is highly likely that those records are woefully out of date. Fourth, records are only for *registered madrassas*.<sup>103</sup>

The Pakistani government traditionally had little oversight on *madrassas*, which led to much speculation as to the actual number of *madrassas* and their enrollment. One factor increasing the discrepancy over the number of *madrassas* was a decision by Benazir Bhutto, in 1994, to suspend the Societies Act of 1860, which required *madrassas* to register with the Administration of Religious Affairs.<sup>104</sup> Bhutto's decision resulted in an explosive growth of unregistered *madrassas*. In August 2005, the Pakistani government reinstituted obligatory registration of *madrassas* as result of public outcry in response to reports that three men involved in the July 7, 2005, London Subway bombing had previously attempted to enroll in a *madrassa* while traveling in Pakistan.<sup>105</sup> The Pakistani government has made participation in the re-established *madrassa* enrollment program voluntary and under the control of local government officials after extensive public outcry. Whatever information has been collected is currently unavailable.

### **3. Who Attends *Madrassas*?**

When trying to define a typical student in a Pakistani *madrassa*, it is easy to fall in the trap of stereotyping. In most U.S. newspaper reports, *madrassa* students are described as boys between 8–15 years old, predominantly from poor families or orphaned. The students live an austere existence in dormitories attached to the *madrassas*. These students spend the bulk of the day learning to recite the *Qur'an* in Arabic from memory or attending sermons in nearby mosques. Music, television and books other than the *Qur'an* are virtually unknown, as is social interaction with members of the opposite sex. Most print

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<sup>103</sup> C. Christine Fair. *Islamic Education in Pakistan*. United States Institute of Peace. 2006. 3-4.

<sup>104</sup> Rahman & Bukhari, 333.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 333.

articles are accompanied by a picture of a boy about 10 years old sitting cross legged on the floor, studying a *Qur'an*, resting on a small wooden stand, while wearing a white cap, sandal, and simple over garments.<sup>106</sup>

Like all stereotypes, this one fails to provide a complete picture. Many *madrassas* provide instruction on Islamic education to girls as well as boys. The girls are predominantly 5 to 9 years old. It is during this age when many Muslims consider it important to provide their children, regardless of sex, with a strong religious education. The education focus for the students of both sexes during this initial religious training consists of memorizing the *Qur'an* and other important Islamic texts in their original language, Arabic or Persian. Usually around age 10, girls' education is moved outside of the *madrassa*; however, there are a few *madrassas* for girls which allow them to continue their education separate from male students.<sup>107</sup>

Another factor that this stereotype misses is the number of part time or day students at *madrassas*. A high percentage of public and private school students attend *madrassas* part time to receive supplemental instruction on Islamic subjects. The period of this dual education varies by individual.

It is true that public and private school is beyond the reach of the majority of Pakistani poor families and recent studies have shown that children from poor families make up a large portion of *madrassa* students. What surprised researchers was the finding that in multiple-child, low-income families, typically only one child was enrolled in a *madrassa*, while the other children attend state-sponsored public school.<sup>108</sup> This may be the result of the custom of in some families to devote one child to religious service. Survey data revealed that less than 2 percent of families with one child enrolled in a *madrassa* did not have other children enrolled in either private or public schools. This shows that even families most likely rely on free *madrassa* education recognize its limitations.

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<sup>106</sup> Stern, Goldberg.

<sup>107</sup> Andrabi, et al., 10.

<sup>108</sup> Andrabi, et al., 22.

Even with all of these caveats, there are many *madrassa* students in Pakistan who resemble very closely the stereotype perpetuated by the American media.

#### **4. Spheres of Influence**

Each of various divisions of Islam within Pakistan support and operate *madrassas*. This division of *madrassas* along sect affiliation is important for the preservation and propagation of each sect's interpretation of the correct form of Islam, referred to as its *maslak* or Islamic creed.<sup>109</sup> While it is easy to see the division and lack of conformity between Shi'a *madrassas* and Sunni *madrassas*, the variation among the Sunni sub-sect can be nearly as extreme. It is not possible to look at Sunni *madrassas* without separating them by sub-sect affiliation, due to their fundamental differences. As the ICG states in its paper on sectarianism in Pakistan, "The divide within Sunni subsects remains as wide as that between puritanical Sunnis and Shias."<sup>110</sup> This division further erodes the notion of a universal model of a *madrassa* in Pakistan.

While the Pakistani government exercises no direct oversight of *madrassas*, a governing body does exist. The Religious Education Board, or *wifaq*, prepares the syllabus *madrassas* use, and establishes examinations to determine competence.<sup>111</sup> In Pakistan, there are five *wifaq*; three Sunni (*Deobandi*, *Barelvi* and *Ahle-Hadith*), one *Shi'ia* and one for supra-sect *Jamaat Islami*.<sup>112</sup> These *wifaq* periodically review the syllabi and recommend changes as well as review and recommend changes to material used during instruction. When necessary, the five boards join together in the United Organizations of Religious Institution or *Ittehad-e-Tanzimat Madraris-e-Diniyah*. This collective effort is not used to debate syllabus or curriculum between sects but as a united front to mitigate government involvement in the conduct of instruction within the *madrassas* (Rahman & Bukhari, 2004).<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ali, 37. Rahman, 3.

<sup>110</sup> ICG *State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Nayyar, 227.

<sup>112</sup> Fair, *Islamic Education in Pakistan*, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Rahman & Bukhari, 333.

It is important to note that all *madrassas* follow the same basic curriculum, regardless of affiliations. This curriculum is called *Dars-e-Nizami*, which was developed in the early eighteenth century by one of the leading Islamic scholars in India, *Mullah Nizam-ud-Din Muhammad*.<sup>114</sup> Originally, the content of the curriculum was a fairly fluid mix of classical and contemporary Islamic writings. In the mid-nineteenth century, *Dars-e-Nizami* was formalized, possibly due to the influence of Western education institutions in colonial India.<sup>115</sup>

## **5. What Do *Madrassas* Teach?**

In October 2003, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz described *madrassas* as “schools that teach hatred, schools that teach terrorism” while providing free, “theologically extremist” teachings to “millions of Muslim children.”<sup>116</sup> The *Washington Post* reported these comments were made while answering questions after a speech at Georgetown University. These comments are in line with the memorandum the Secretary of Defense prepared earlier that same month. The comments are also similar to the indictment of *madrassa* teaching made in 2000 by two separate authors writing on *madrassas* in Pakistan, Jessica Stern and Jeffrey Goldberg. In her December 2000 *Foreign Affairs* article “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture,” Stern labeled *madrassas* as “schools of hate.”<sup>117</sup> Goldberg described the Haqqania *Madrassa*, which he visited, as a “Jihadi factory.”<sup>118</sup> The interest in *madrassa* teachings existed prior to 9/11, and after the attacks they received greater political visibility. Do these comments accurately reflect the nature of *madrassas* in Pakistan?

As stated earlier, *Dars-e-Nizami* is the curriculum of all *madrassa* in Pakistan regardless of the sect affiliation. This curriculum covers both religious

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<sup>114</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman. “Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: the Madrasa in British India and Pakistan.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41:2. 1999. 303.

<sup>115</sup> Zaman “Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform,” 304.

<sup>116</sup> Walter Pincus, “Idea of Influencing Schools Echoes 50’s” *The Washington Post*, November 1, 2003. A-19.

<sup>117</sup> Jessica Stern, “Pakistan’s Jihad Culture” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2000. 118.

<sup>118</sup> Jeffery Goldberg, “The Education of a Holy Warrior,” *New York Times Magazine*, June 25, 2000, 34.

and secular topics; however, most of the texts it uses were written between the ninth and eighteenth century.<sup>119</sup> The primary difference between how each sect employs *Dars-e-Nizami* deals with non-curriculum texts each sect uses to reinforce their particular point of view or rationalize their particular beliefs.<sup>120</sup> The emphasis on the *Dars-e-Nizami* method “lies in part in the superior training it offered prospective lawyers, judges and administrators. The study of advanced books of logic, philosophy and dialectics sharpened the rational faculties and, ideally, brought to the business of government men with better-trained minds and better-formed judgment.”<sup>121</sup> While *Dars-e-Nizami* emphasizes studies based on *maqulat*, human reasoning, most sects ignore this aspect and focus instead on rote memorization of the classic texts prescribed by the curriculum.<sup>122</sup>

The *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum is typically based on an eight-year timeline but can be as long as sixteen years, depending on when the student is accepted to the institution. The following table is a typical curriculum taken from the website of *Darul-Uloom Deoband* in India, which sets the basic curriculum taught by *madrassas* in Pakistan,

1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Biography of the Prophet ( <i>Syrat</i> ), Conjugation-Grammar ( <i>Sarf</i> ), Syntax ( <i>Nahv</i> ), Arabic Literature, Chirography, Chant illation ( <i>Tajvid</i> )
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Conjugation-Grammar ( <i>Sarf</i> ), Syntax ( <i>Nahv</i> ), Arabic Literature, Jurisprudence ( <i>Fiqa</i> ), Logic, Chirography ( <i>Khush-navisi</i> ), Chant illation, ( <i>Tajvid</i> )
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	<i>Qur'anic</i> Exegesis, Jurisprudence: ( <i>Fiqh</i> ), Syntax ( <i>Nahv</i> ), Arabic Literature, <i>Hadith</i> , Logic, Islamic Brotherhood, Chant illation: ( <i>Tajvid</i> ), External study (Tareekh Millat and Khilafat-e-Rashida – these are Indian Islamic movements).
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	<i>Qur'anic</i> Exegesis, Jurisprudence ( <i>Fiqa</i> ), Principles of Jurisprudence, Rhetorics, <i>Hadith</i> , Logic, History, Cant illation, Modern Sciences (sciences of cities of Arabia, Geography of the Arab Peninsula and other Islamic countries)
5 <sup>th</sup> Year	<i>Qur'anic</i> Exegesis, Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, Rhetoric, Beliefs ( <i>Aqa'id</i> ), Logic, Arabic Literature, Chant illation, External study (History of Indian Kings)
6 <sup>th</sup> Year	Interpretation of the <i>Qur'an</i> , Jurisprudence, Principles of Interpretation & Jurisprudence, Arabic Literature, Philosophy, Chant illation, Study of Prophet's traditions

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<sup>119</sup> Zaman, “Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform,” 303.

<sup>120</sup> Rahman, 3.

<sup>121</sup> Rahman, 4.

<sup>122</sup> Ali, 37-38.

7 <sup>th</sup> Year	Sayings of the Prophet, Jurisprudence, Belief (Aqa'ed), Responsibility (Fra'iz), Chant illation, External Study (Urdu texts)
8 <sup>th</sup> Year	Ten books by various authors focusing on the sayings of the Prophet.

Table 1. *Dars-e-Nizami* Curriculum<sup>123</sup>

Most of the texts used are ancient works that actually predate the creation of *Dars-e-Nizami* and for the most part are taught in their original Arabic or Persian form. A South Asian scholar studying Islamic politics and institutions made the following comments about the works used in *Dars-e-Nizami* when he wrote,

...most of the books taught in this curriculum are very old. Books used in philosophy and logic, for example, were written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Medicine is taught through an eleventh-century text that is still considered an authentic study of human anatomy and pathology. In what we have described as purely religious subjects, the books used date back to the seventeenth century at the latest and the eleventh century at the earliest. Books prescribed for astronomy, mathematics, and grammar are more than five- to seven-hundred-year-old texts.<sup>124</sup>

Since *madrassas* see themselves as protectors of what is pure Islam, the use of classic texts in the original language serves as a method to preserve tradition and ensure continuity of Islamic identity.<sup>125</sup> This adherence to tradition and continuity comes at the cost of preparing graduates to deal with impact of modernity on Islam.

Many Islamic thinkers have criticized this devotion to ancient learning while ignoring learning needed to deal with the modern world. One of the most vocal critics was Maulana Mawdudi who argued that, being based on memorization of medieval texts, the *madrassas* were not providing the relevant education Muslims need to deal with modern life.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, many argue that being able to read and recite the *Qur'an* and other classic Islamic works in

<sup>123</sup> Anzar, 15.

<sup>124</sup> Mumtaz Ahmad, "Madrasa Education in Pakistan and Bangladesh," *Religious Radicalism and Security In South Asia*. Edited by Satu P. Limaye, Mohan Malik, Robert G. Wirsing. 2004, 103.

<sup>125</sup> Rahman, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Rahman, 3.

Arabic and Persian has little effect on students' abilities to speak or read these languages beyond what is required for their studies. Many *madrassa* realize this and use supporting texts in native Pakistani languages of Pashtu and Urdu when attempts are made to enlighten students as to the meaning of the classics. Regardless of the texts taught in *madrassas*, jihad and militancy are not topics of the traditional curriculum.

When looking for the militancy in *madrassas*, one must look beyond the texts and curriculum and listen to the messages of the teachers. The rhetoric of the *madrassa* teachers, whether anti-Western or condemning the Muslims who do not share the same beliefs, creates xenophobic atmospheres in order to stress the purity and righteousness their particular Islamic identity. This sectarian superiority and arrogance carries over into the teaching of Refutation or *Radd* in Arabic. Refutation has been described as "pungent criticism of other sects, hatred toward other sects' members, and siege mentality that is imparted from the very beginning of (*madrassa*) schooling."<sup>127</sup> This tradition of critiquing the faith of competing Islamic sects has been linked to increased sectarian violence in Pakistan in recent years.<sup>128</sup> The institutionalization of refutation and the extremist rhetoric has led to "violent social context where sectarian identity has become militarized, the negative bias created through the texts used in *madrassas* and vilification of others beliefs regularly through speeches bound to produce anger and militancy."<sup>129</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Created in 1947 as a nation for Indian's Muslims, Pakistan has never been able to successfully build a national identity based solely on religion. From its very origin, Islam has had to compete with the various tribal, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities which define the people of Pakistan. The unifying capability

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<sup>127</sup> Riaz, 20.

<sup>128</sup> Rahman, 4. Nayyar, 242.

<sup>129</sup> Riaz, 21.



of religion is further reduced when one must consider the numerous variations of Islam practiced within Pakistan. Given all of this diversity, it is easy to see how Pakistani society became so stratified and segmented.

Since social institutions are reflections of the societies that create and sustain them, it should not be surprising that religious education in Pakistan is as stratified as it is. A more useful and less contentious approach for the *madrassas* of Pakistan would be a place where a common understanding of Islam is developed, especially in light of the commonality of their curriculums. Instead, *madrassas* have become the opposite. Sects use their *madrassas* as a tool to reinforce group identity and superiority. Combine the traditional conservatism of *madrassas* with their societal role of sectarian identity development and the potential for problems seems only to increase.

The government of Pakistan is responsible for some of the current issues with the *madrassas*. The government's overt program of Islamization in the 1970s and 1980s, and removal of registration requirements in the 1990s, resulted in the *madrassas* moving beyond the control of the state. Add to this the degenerative state of Pakistan's public education system and the lack of access to better private education by most Pakistanis and it is easy to see why *madrassas* increased in number. *Madrassas'* potential market share of students will only increase due to this. Even with the re-instatement of the *madrassa* registration laws, the government has been unable to make registration mandatory due to the political power bases the *madrassas* were able to create in the last twenty five years. Historically, *madrassas* were a state institution which legitimized the government. Today in Pakistan, *madrassas* have developed into a system of education which exists for the most part beyond the state's reach.

Despite the notion that Pakistan is a Muslim state, it was and will continue to be a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-sect Islamic state. The many secular and religious identities within Pakistan work as an efficient counter to the unifying factor of Islam. Many times the uniqueness of language, ethnicity and or culture is only reinforced by the many different ways Islam is practiced in Pakistan. The use of *madrassas* to institutionalize the sectarian identities is very

troubling, especially given the lack of government oversight. Perpetuation of sectarian doctrine by religious schools legitimates sectarianism, and creates conditions favorable to the development of militancy and violence.

## IV. MADRASSAS, POLITICS, AND MILITANCY

### A. INTRODUCTION

In 2002, Pakistan reported 58 registered religious political parties and 24 known militant groups.<sup>130</sup> A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) quotes Pakistani jihadist scholar Rana Amir as estimating that “Pakistan has as many as 245 religious groups, with over 100 focusing on external (regional) jihad and 82 on sectarian issues.”<sup>131</sup> The same ICG report goes on to describe the relationship between *madrassas* and these religious parties in the following manner

In fact, all Sunni and Shia religio-political parties, movements and extremist organisations operate on the principle of exclusion. They compete for the souls of ordinary Muslims and aggressively proselytise through their *dawa* (preaching) organs. Each group has its own networks of madrasas, whose curricula are diametrically opposed to one another, thus serving to reinforce Pakistan's sectarian divide.<sup>132</sup>

*Madrassas'* support to religious political parties runs the spectrum from basic political indoctrination to advocating and supporting violent militancy. There is little doubt that *madrassas* play a role in the perpetuation of Islamist ideology in Pakistan today. This activity is common across all sects and ethnicities. It is also important to note that *madrassas* have played an important role in the creation of many Islamist groups. This reinforcing relationship makes it difficult to determine whether *madrassa* militancy is a symptom of Islamic extremism or a cause.

To address that puzzle, this chapter focuses on the relationship between *madrassas* and militancy. The chapter looks briefly at the impact of religious groups on Pakistan's political arena and then discusses several events that

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<sup>130</sup> Saeed Shafqat, "From Official Islam to Islamism" in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation* Christophe Jaffrelot ed., 2002. 133.

<sup>131</sup> ICG, *State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, 6. Crisis Group interview with Amir Rana, author of *A to Z of Jehadi Organisations in Pakistan*.

<sup>132</sup> International Crisis Group, *State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*. ICG Asia report #95, 2005, 4.

greatly influenced modern *madrassas*. Finally, this chapter explores the involvement of Pakistani *madrassas* in violence and militancy at the global, regional and internal levels.

## **B. RELIGION IN POLITICS**

The coalescence of religion and politics into political organizations is not a recent development in Pakistan. These religious-political or Islamist groups existed while Pakistan was still part of British Colonial India and have shaped Pakistan's government and its policy from the beginning. While many Muslim political parties existed prior to the partition, one of the largest and most influential Muslim political parties was the pro-partition Pakistan Muslim League (PML). The PML was essentially an alliance of pro-Pakistan interests with little buy-in from the Islamic communities of the regions which became Pakistan. In 1941, Islamic scholar Abdul ala Mawdudi and 75 other leading Muslim thinkers and jurists founded *Jamaat-i-Islami* as the Muslim political party focused on creating an Islamic government and countering the secular agenda of the PML.<sup>133</sup> After the partition, Deobandi in Pakistan formed the *Jamiatul Ulema-i-Islam* (JUI) religious political party using their *madrassas* as its foundation. The Bareilvi followed suit by basing its political party, *Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan* (JUP), on its *madrassas*. The *Ahle-Hadith* Sunni sect and the Shi'a also developed religious political parties in the same manner.<sup>134</sup> By 1955, secular political organizations dominated the Pakistani politics, overshadowing the PML and the sectarian political parties.

Between the mid-1950s and the resurgence of religious political parties in the 1970s, religio-political groups may not have been capable of dominating the political system but they were using their influence to mobilize public action in regard to issues they believed to be important. The first of example of their "street power" was in 1953, when Sunni-Shi'a groups held joint demonstrations

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<sup>133</sup> Nasr, *Vanguards of the Islamic Revolution*, 21.

<sup>134</sup> Nayyar, "Madrassa Education Frozen in Time," 239.

demanding the Ahmadiya sect be declared a non-Islamic cult.<sup>135</sup> These demonstrations resulted in the downfall of the Punjab provincial government and significant changes in the national leadership. Another Islamist-instigated action with national consequences occurred in 1962, when people took to the streets demanding the government designate Pakistan as an Islamic Republic.<sup>136</sup> This pattern might have continued had the political elite not increased its pressure on the religious political groups to support the government in its efforts to counter the agenda of the socialist political parties and internal ethnic independence movements in Baluchistan and Sindh in the early 1970s.<sup>137</sup>

Since the 1970s, religious political groups in Pakistan have become more active. In the 1970 elections, religious party candidates won 18 seats in the 300-seat National Assembly. The religious parties' portion of the political sphere stayed pretty small until the October 2002 elections. Capitalizing on American involvement in Afghanistan, religious political parties were able to garner 11 percent of the popular vote and 20 percent of the seats in the lower house of Parliament.<sup>138</sup> For the first time in Pakistan's history, religious parties potentially achieved a power-brokering role.<sup>139</sup> It is important to note this historic victory was not achieved by one religious party, but a coalition of six. The strength of the coalition determines its ability to shape politics.

In the brief span of fifty-five years, Islamist parties in Pakistan have been formative nationalist organizations—population mobilization tools—and now are integrated political participants. Some scholars argue Islamist political groups have moved beyond political participant to policy privatization with their

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<sup>135</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Origins and Growth Patterns of Islamic Organizations in Pakistan" *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*. Edited by Satu Limaye, Mohan Malik, & Robert Wirsing, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004, 22-23.

<sup>136</sup> Waseem, 22.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>138</sup> Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan – Between the Mosque and the Military*. Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2005, 1.

<sup>139</sup> Robert Wirsing, "Introduction: Religion, Radicalism, and Security in South Asia" *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*. Edited by Satu Limaye, Mohan Malik, & Robert Wirsing, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004, 10.

involvement in internal and external conflicts.<sup>140</sup> At times the government condones and even covertly supports this involvement, such as in Kashmir. Other times the government appears to be unable to control the Islamist. For example the December 2003 assassination attempts on President Musharraf have been attributed to *Jaish-e-Muhammad* (JeM), a militant Islamic organization which is known to operate in support of the Pakistani supported insurgency in Kashmir.<sup>141</sup> Despite this, there is a history in Pakistan of the government and the Islamist using each other for political gain.

### C. CATALYTIC EVENTS

It is also important to understand that many of the major issues that influenced *madrassas* to political activism existed prior to the creation of Pakistan or were as a result of the partition of Pakistan from India. Many of these issues lay dormant for many years as Pakistan developed. The classic Islamic struggle between the Sunni and Shi'a is one example. In 1963, Pakistan experienced its first recorded incident of sectarian violence when 100 Shi'a were killed in Sindh province after the government refused a petition by Sunni ulema to outlaw Shi'a public religious activities.<sup>142</sup> Pakistan would remain relatively free of violent sectarian conflict until events of the late 1970s mobilized both Sunni and Shi'a.

The political mobilization of *madrassas* was heavily influenced by four major events occurring in 1979. In that year, the leader of Pakistan, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, began a program to "Islamize" Pakistan. Since Zia was Sunni, many facets of his program to institutionalize Islam into the nation were based on Sunni beliefs and interpretations of Islamic law. In order to protect their beliefs and legal interpretations, Shi'a banded together and demanded exemptions from many of the more obvious Sunni traditions. Zia eventually did exempt Shi'a from many aspects of the Islamization program; most notably the government collection and distribution of traditional Islamic alms, *zakat*.<sup>143</sup> This

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<sup>140</sup> Waseem, 33.

<sup>141</sup> Carlotta Gall and Arif Jamal, "Man at Heart of British Terrorist Plot Laid Roots in Land Riff with Sunni Extremism" *The New York Times*, August 21, 2006, A-8.

<sup>142</sup> ICG, *State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, 9.

<sup>143</sup> Haqqani, 140-141.

action resulted in a conflict between the state and Shi'a community, which would eventually devolve into a political power struggle disguised as a sectarian struggle between the Sunni and Shi'a.

While Zia's Islamization program provided the bulk of the internal influence, *madrassas* would also be influenced by dramatic changes in the Muslim world. The Iranian Revolution and overthrow of the pro-Western Shah in 1979 would reverberate throughout the Islamic world. For the Shi'a in Pakistan, the success of the revolution would provide renewed sense of importance and, coupled with their success in deflecting Zia's Islamization initiatives against them, would lead to increased political mobilization. As part of its ideology of spreading the Shi'a revolution, Iran provided money to Pakistan's Shi'a community, built cultural centers, paid for Pakistani Shi'a to study in Iran, and even funded Shi'a *madrassas* in Pakistan.<sup>144</sup>

Zia's Islamization program directly influenced *madrassas* in several ways. First, it identified 10 percent of *zakat* be provided to *madrassas*.<sup>145</sup> This was the first time in Pakistan's history that *madrassas* received funding from the government. Second, the program formally recognized *madrassa* degrees as equivalent to secular university degrees.<sup>146</sup> Since *madrassa* degrees were considered the same formal school degrees, many positions within the state bureaucracy were now available for *madrassa* graduates. A prominent scholar of Islam, S.V.R. Nasr offered this description of the results of these initiatives, "...many *madrassas* began to look beyond training ulama to provide the Islamizing state with its new 'Islamic bureaucracy'."<sup>147</sup> In Islamizing Pakistan, the government was creating a "new educational arena which the *madrassas* were encouraged to dominate."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Mariam Abou Zahab, "The Regional Dimension of Sectarian Conflict" *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*. Christophe Jaffrelot ed., 2002. 116.

<sup>145</sup> ICG, *State of Sectarianism*, 10.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Nasr. "Rise of Sunni Militancy" 146.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 147.

This increased political power of Pakistan's Shi'a community also drew the ire of two other external powers. By the 1980s, Saudi Arabia and Iraq were actively engaged in combating the expansion of Iranian Shi'a Islam and were concerned by the situation developing in Pakistan. To counter the threat of increased Shi'a power in Pakistan, both countries supported Sunni political organizations and *madrassas*,<sup>149</sup> with the Saudi government and non-governmental organizations most often supporting *madrassas* of the *Ahle-Hadith* sub sect.<sup>150</sup> The Pakistani government also engaged in supporting Sunni sects against the Shi'a. In an effort to improve its legitimacy, the government of Pakistan primarily supported Deobandi and to a lesser extent *Jamat-i-Islami* organizations and *madrassa* to counter foreign investment in the Shi'a and other Sunni communities.<sup>151</sup> *Madrassas* had become ideological battlefields in the proxy war being waged in Pakistan between Sunnis and Shi'a.

The final event of 1979 that influenced political activism in *madrassas* was the Christmas Day invasion of neighboring Afghanistan by Soviet military forces. While Sunni and Shi'a were struggling with each other to determine who represents the true Islam, they also engaged in holy war, *jihad*, in Afghanistan. For nearly ten years, Afghans and other Muslims from across the world fought against the Soviet military and its local communist allies. These freedom fighters were heavily funded by the United States and Saudi Arabia who used Pakistan's government and Intelligence Service to manage the war.<sup>152</sup>

When the Soviets invaded, several million Afghans fled to Pakistan to avoid the war. Part of Zia's Islamization program focused on establishing

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<sup>149</sup> S.V.R. Nasr, "Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy." *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*. Christophe Jaffrelot ed., 2002. 92.

<sup>150</sup> International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military*. Asia Report No. 36. 2002. 12.

<sup>151</sup> Riaz, 16.

<sup>152</sup> Stephen Coll. *Ghost War*. Penguin Books, 2004. In *Ghost War*, Stephen Coll describes how the U.S. government through the CIA allocated over \$2 billion of resources and funds to support the anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan between 1980 and 1989. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan and the Saudi royal family formed an agreement in which the Saudi's would match U.S. contributions to the jihad in Afghanistan, adding another \$2 billion to the effort (p. 65). Additionally, CIA sources estimated that by the mid-1980's another \$25 million per month was arriving from non-government sources located in Arabian Gulf states (p. 165).



*madrassas* in Pakistan's border areas in order to educate the Afghan refugees.<sup>153</sup> Soon these *madrassas* were receiving funding from the state as well as from various foreign donors and Islamic non-governmental organizations. Many of these *madrassas* were actually formed as militant training centers to support the Afghan war and called *madrassas* to "Islamically legitimize their operations and to solicit funds from all over the Muslim world," and were never intended to fulfill the traditional role of producing ulema or even Islamic bureaucrats.<sup>154</sup> For example, one scholar who studied the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), which served as a major source of support to operations in Afghanistan, derived the following,

From 1979 until 1999, the number of *madrassas* in NWFP rose from 350 to 1281, about a 30 percent increase. It is estimated that 200,000 youths from NWFP which participated in Afghanistan. Of 15,000 youths who died in Afghanistan, sixty percent (9000) came from *madrassas*.<sup>155</sup>

#### **D. MADRASSA, SECTARIANISM, AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

Conditions that contribute to sectarianism and political activism exist in many *madrassas*, regardless of sect, in Pakistan. Contrary to popular opinion the traditional curriculum of *madrassas* is not the source of political activism. Mumtaz Ahmad describes the traditional curriculum as, "ultra-conservative, literalist, legalist, and sectarian, but definitely not revolutionary, radical, or militant."<sup>156</sup> Ahmad goes on to say,

Radicalism that we see in some *madrassas* in Pakistan today is an extraneous phenomenon brought into *madrassas* by some international and domestic political actors who wanted to use the religious capital and manpower of these *madrassas* for their own objectives.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ali, 32. Coll, 61.

<sup>154</sup> Mumtaz Ahmad, "Madrassa education in Pakistan and Bangladesh." *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, Asian-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004. 114

<sup>155</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana. *Gateway to Terrorism*. Millennium Press, 2002, 60.

<sup>156</sup> Rana, 115.

<sup>157</sup> Ahmad, 114.

As discussed earlier, these conditions predominantly arise from the practices of sectarian refutation, the tradition of contesting other sects' interpretation of Islam, and are exacerbated by the rhetoric of *madrassa* teachers. It is important to note that even with the conditioning that occurs in *madrassas*, most *madrassas* do NOT engage in violence and are mostly apolitical. Most *madrassas* linked to militancy and terrorism since the mid-1990s trace their origin to the late 1980s.<sup>158</sup> To fully appreciate the linkages between militant teaching in *madrassa* and violence, violent action must be stratified into internal sectarian violence, regional violence and global Jihad.

For practical purposes, the review of *madrassa* involvement in violence will begin at the macro level with trans-national terrorism. It will then look for links between regional violence and *madrassas*. Finally, the links between *madrassas* and internal sectarian violence will be explored.

### **1. Transnational Terrorism**

Transnational terrorism, also known as Global Jihad, is defined as attacks against the United States at home and abroad to end its support for Muslim regimes they consider apostate and unworthy to rule Muslims.<sup>159</sup> As Marc Sageman illuminated in *Understanding Terror Networks*, the majority of Muslims involved in global jihad are middle class urbanites with little formal Islamic education.<sup>160</sup> Gilles Kepel describes global jihadis as, "not the urban poor of the third world so much as "the privileged children of an unlikely marriage between Wahhabism and Silicon Valley."<sup>161</sup> Bin Laden's own writings since the mid-1990s show his frustration with Muslim scholars and the Islamic education system's tendency to focus on the minutiae of Islam and ignore the struggle between Islam and modern life.<sup>162</sup>

While some of those involved in global jihad have received some education in *madrassas*, many of these same members also attended advanced

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<sup>158</sup> Ahmad, 115.

<sup>159</sup> Gerges, 13.

<sup>160</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*.

<sup>161</sup> Ghilles Kepel, *War for the Muslim Mind*. 112.

<sup>162</sup> Dalrymple, 2005, 7.

secular education institutions sometimes located in the West. When looking into the education background of the jihadist, Peter Bergen and Swati Pandey see a much stronger correlation between exposure to higher secular education, especially in non-Muslim countries, and involvement in global jihadist activities.<sup>163</sup> This conclusion is supported by data reported separately by Sageman, Kepel, and Gerges. Bergen and Pandey argue the existence of a correlation between Western secular education and global jihadism, since 5 percent of known terrorists linked to global jihadist terrorism received some form of advance education.<sup>164</sup> Despite this evidence, many still contend a link exists between global jihadism and *madrassas*.

There are several reasons why the idea that *madrassas* are involved in global jihad persists. First, there are a few known members of al-Qaeda that attended *madrassas* in Pakistan. The PBS series *Frontline* highlighted this point in its episode entitled "Saudi Time Bomb?" This episode included a profile on Comoro Islander, Haroun Fazul, an al-Qaeda member suspected in the 1998 Nairobi Embassy Bombing. At sixteen, Fazul received a scholarship to study at a *madrassa* in Pakistan. Reportedly, Fazul received military training in the *madrassa* and then participated in the Afghan civil war, where he was recruited by al-Qaeda.<sup>165</sup> Fazul and few other al-Qaeda members' *madrassa* attendance is less significant when compared with a more common trait among al-Qaeda members, involvement fighting in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation or the subsequent civil war.

The data used by scholars to argue potential links between *madrassas* and global jihad also sustains the debate. The current set of data which connects al-Qaeda members to *madrassas* only covers known terrorist. Marc Sageman's book uses information on 172 known al-Qaeda members to develop of profile.<sup>166</sup> Only 12 of 137 terrorist on whom educational data was available

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<sup>163</sup> Peter Bergen & Swati Pandey, 2006, 118.

<sup>164</sup> Bergen & Pandey, 118.

<sup>165</sup> PBS *Frontline On-line*, "The Saudi Time Bomb?" Retrieved October 3, 2006 from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/fazul/>.

<sup>166</sup> Sageman, 70.

attended *madrassas*.<sup>167</sup> This correlates to less than 9 percent of the sample population and severely weakens the argument of *madrassas* being sources of transnational terrorism. Some scholars have argued that Sageman's focus on known terrorists results in a selection bias that could lead to inaccurate or incomplete inferences from the data.<sup>168</sup> Sageman recognizes these limitations and does address in his findings. Despite this, Sageman's work is still one of the best frameworks for describing what is currently known about global jihadist and *madrassas*.

Ultimately, current information does not support much of a link between *madrassas* and global jihadists. While there are some known terrorist who attended *madrassas*, known evidence indicates that *madrassa* attendance is of lesser importance than other factors, particularly being involved in jihad struggles in Afghanistan.

## **2. Regional Violence**

While many researchers on terrorism contend *madrassa* education lacks sufficient modern and technical instruction to provide graduates of the caliber of known al-Qaeda terrorists, several *madrassas* have known and overt links to regional militant factions operating in South Asia.<sup>169</sup> One of the most famous of these relationships is between the Taliban of Afghanistan and the Haqqania *Madrassa* located in North-West Frontier Province town of Akora Khattak. Mullah Omar and other leaders of the Taliban were reported to have attended this *madrassa*.<sup>170</sup> The headmaster, Maulana Sami ul-Haq, boasts of closing the school and sending the students off to fight with the Taliban when they called for support.<sup>171</sup> This *madrassa* has about 2,500 students.

While the *Haqqania Madrassa* captures headlines and shapes the opinion of Western audiences, *madrassa* are also linked to militancy in other parts South Asia. The disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir has been a point of contention

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<sup>167</sup> Sageman, 74.

<sup>168</sup> Interview with C. Christine Fair. 28 August 2006.

<sup>169</sup> Bergen & Pandey, 118.

<sup>170</sup> Dalrymple, 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Dalrymple, 2005.

between India and Pakistan since the end of colonial rule. In 1948, Pakistan and India engaged in a year-long armed conflict over Kashmir. Since the late 1980s, Pakistan has supported different independence groups in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Initially, Pakistan supported the secular Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). While the JKLF was anti-Indian, it was not necessarily pro-Pakistan. In the early 1990s, the *madrassa*-based Islamist militant groups such as *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and *Harkat-ul-Ansar* (re-named *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen*) began receiving funding for operations in Kashmir from the Pakistan Army and Intelligence Service.<sup>172</sup> An ominous sign of the involvement of these jihadist groups was that violence between insurgent factions in Kashmir was almost as high as between insurgent and Indian forces.<sup>173</sup> In *Gateway to Terrorism*, researcher Amir Rana compiled a list of over 200 *Deobandi*, 77 *Ahle-Hadith*, and 23 *Barelvi* *madrassas* that are jihadist in nature or support Kashmiri jihadist organizations.<sup>174</sup> Among the *madrassa* listed is *Dar Uloom Islamia*, a *Deobandi* *madrassa* known to support *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen*. It is also recognized as the birthplace of the Jihadist group implicated in the December 2003 assassination attempts on Musharraf, *Jaish-e-Muhammad* (JeM).<sup>175</sup>

*Lashkar-e-Tayyiba* (LeT) is one of the largest and most active jihadist groups involved in Jammu and Kashmir. LeT was established in 1993 as the military arm of the prominent *Markaz-ad-Da'awa-Wal-Irshad* *madrassa* located in Muridke, Pakistan.<sup>176</sup> While LeT operates predominately in Kashmir, it is comprised of mainly non-Kashmiri Pakistanis and Afghans. When the Musharraf government outlawed LeT in January 2002, LeT had the largest contingent of Pakistani militants on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir—some 1,500

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<sup>172</sup> Jean-Luc Racine, "Pakistan and the India Syndrome" *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation*. Christophe Jaffrelot ed., 2002. 204.

<sup>173</sup> Rana, 33-34, 104.

<sup>174</sup> Rana, 586, 660, 661.

<sup>175</sup> Rana, 610.

<sup>176</sup> Peter Chalk and C. Christine Fair, "*Lashkar-e-Tayyiba* leads the Kashmiri Insurgency," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1, 2002. Retrieved September 26, 2006 from <https://search.janes.com>, 1.

jihadist.<sup>177</sup> Many regional observers believe LeT's attack on India's national parliament in December 2001 forced Musharraf to acquiesce to U.S. demands to crack down on jihadist groups in Pakistan.<sup>178</sup> Despite being officially designated an illegal organization, LeT continues to operate with Jammu and Kashmir, with bases in Pakistani controlled Azad Kashmir. LeT also allegedly continues to recruit and operator training camps with the support and involvement of Pakistan's Intelligence Service. Even with LeT outlawed, its parent *madrassa*, *Markaz-ad-Da'awa-Wal-Irshad*, continues operate and promote its Kashmir and India jihad centric agenda. The reach of this *madrassa* is extended through its 130 satellite institutions located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.<sup>179</sup>

These are just a few examples of *madrassas* supporting regional Islamic militancy. The Pakistani Ministry of Education speculates only 10 to 15 percent of *madrassas* have links to sectarian militancy or regional terrorism.<sup>180</sup> The government admits these statistics are unreliable, much like the Ministry of Education's data on the type and number of *madrassas*.<sup>181</sup> One can only speculate at the potential number of students this involves. How did jihadist and *madrassas* come to form this relationship?

*Madrassas* became involved in regional violence during the Soviet-Afghan war when *some madrassas were* used to educate and recruit Muslims to fight with the *mujahideen* forces in Afghanistan. *Madrassas* which supported organizations operating in Afghanistan received support from the Pakistani government as well as from donors in Sunni Arab nations who supported jihad in Afghanistan. These *madrassas* differed from the existing *madrassas* in that most were not religious seminaries but were used to indoctrinate and train recruits for the fight against the Soviets. Calling these centers *madrassas* provided the

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<sup>177</sup> Chalk and Fair, 1.

<sup>178</sup> Chalk and Fair.

<sup>179</sup> Chalk and Fair, 1.

<sup>180</sup> Looney, 262.

<sup>181</sup> Even with the admitted inaccuracy of the government's statistic, that means there are potentially 700 to 1500 *madrassas* with links to known jihadist and sectarian organizations. Ali, 85.

jihadist an element of legitimacy and increased access to funding sources.<sup>182</sup> With the end of fighting between the Soviets and Afghans in 1989, elements within the Pakistani government utilized established networks to improve Pakistan's position regarding regional struggles. Pakistan supported selected Islamic militant groups in Afghanistan's civil war, which resulted in the eventual domination of most of Afghanistan by the Taliban after 1996. Pakistan also sought to use militant Islamic groups in its struggle with India over the disputed Kashmir region.<sup>183</sup> While the United States actively supported Pakistan's employment of militant Islamists in Afghanistan against the Soviets, the U.S. was alarmed at Pakistan support to the Taliban in Afghanistan and the use militant Islamist in Kashmir.<sup>184</sup>

Many have speculated that Pakistan hoped to achieve success in Kashmir by exporting jihadist from Afghanistan. Others have argued that the jihadist culture, which supported fighting in Afghanistan, had taken root and spread beyond Pakistan's border regions. Their existing networks of *madrassas* provided them with access to funding, weapons and fighters. More importantly, it provided access to indoctrinated jihadist. As Ghazi Khan, an important leader of a jihadist group operating in Kashmir, put it, "Mujahideen coming from *madrassas* are valuable to us because their instructions and preaching have a far-reaching impact on the nature of society."<sup>185</sup>

In the wake of 9/11, Pakistani President Musharraf has attempted to distance the government from the jihadist by outlawing many of the militant Islamic political parties and jihadi groups. The government is also attempting to exert control over *madrassas* associated with these proscribed organizations in order to appear to be dealing the issue of regional religious violent.<sup>186</sup> Many of these groups have simply renamed themselves and continue to operate in Pakistan, Kashmir, and other parts of South Asia.

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<sup>182</sup> Ahmad, 114.

<sup>183</sup> Riaz, 19.

<sup>184</sup> Rahman, 2004.

<sup>185</sup> Rana, 60.

<sup>186</sup> Rahman, 2004. Lancaster & Khan, 2004.

### 3. Sectarian Violence

In 1984, at the height of the Afghan–Soviet war, the United States provided \$250 million to Pakistan to fund Muslim rebels in Afghanistan.<sup>187</sup> All this funding, along with the pro-Muslim stance of Pakistan's leader General Zia, resulted in intense rivalry among the various *madrassa*-based Islamist groups seeking to improve their political position and increase their share of state funding for *mujahideen*.<sup>188</sup> These intense rivalries fractured Pakistan's political parties, resulting in the rise of sectarian religious organizations that used their *madrassas* to mobilize public support and political power. As Riaz puts it, "The government controlled *zakat* funds and U.S. money was the prize they went after, but to increase their shares of the pie they had to marginalize their opponents ideologically, dwarf them numerically and if necessary annihilate them physically."<sup>189</sup> The end of the Soviet–Afghan war did little to change this movement. Additionally, external resourcing, by Saudi Arabia to the *Ahle-Hadith* and from Iran to Shi'a *madrassas*, only served to exacerbate these sectarian divides.

Sectarian conflict and violence is one of Pakistan's largest internal security concerns. Sectarian conflict is not limited to the traditional struggle between Sunnis and Shi'a. Intra-sectarian conflict between Sunni sub-sect does occur and tends to be as nasty as the larger sectarian conflict. An example was the rioting Deobandi *madrassas* students who damaged a Barelvi shrine after the assassination of Maulana Tariq Azam in October 2003.<sup>190</sup> More recently, the April 11, 2006, bomb blast in Karachi, which killed 50 and injured over 100 Barelvi celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohammad, has been attributed to militant Sunnis of Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandi or Wahabi origin.<sup>191</sup> While this attack has been classified as sectarian, it was probably motivated more by political than

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<sup>187</sup> Stephen Coll, *Ghost War*. 2004, 102.

<sup>188</sup> Riaz, 17.

<sup>189</sup> Riaz, 17.

<sup>190</sup> Ali, 68.

<sup>191</sup> Alok Bansal, "Pakistan: New Strands of Sectarianism," Institute of Peace and Conflict Study websight, article # 2013, May 12, 2006. Retrieved November 24, 2006 from <http://ipcs.org/printArticle.jsp?kValue=2013>.



religious considerations. Additionally, many non-criminal incidents of violence which are ethnic or tribal in origin tend to be classified as sectarian. This tendency obscures the true nature of Pakistan's sectarian violence.

Sectarian researcher Amir Mir describes violence in Pakistan as resulting from "the support extended by the country's third military ruler, President General Zia ul-Haq, to the jihadi and sectarian groups during the Afghan war of the 1980s" and says this support "created these unmanageable monsters who now rise to consume their own creators."<sup>192</sup> Mir describes the root of sectarian conflict in Pakistan as having little to do with religious differences and more to do with political and economic conditions in Pakistan and South Asia. As he put it, "the largely theological differences between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims of Pakistan have been transformed into a full-fledged political conflict, with broad ramifications for law and order, social cohesion and governmental authority."<sup>193</sup>

Between 1989 and 2006, Pakistan experienced 1,936 violent sectarian incidents which resulted in 2,025 deaths and 4,675 casualties.<sup>194</sup> Currently there are no data sources that directly link *madrassa* involvement with sectarian violence. Most of the information on *madrassa* involvement with sectarian violence comes from reports by police and media, or when sectarian groups with *madrassa* connections claim responsibility for attacks. The limited amount of background information results in an acknowledgement of a link between sectarian violence and *madrassas*, but doesn't allow for the level of involvement to be clearly determined.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

There is little debate over the role religious parties have had in shaping Pakistan. *Madrassas* have played an important role as well, serving as the party foundations and as a resource to shape public opinion and politically indoctrinate individuals. The influence of Zia's Islamization program, Jihad in Afghanistan

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<sup>192</sup> Amir Mir, "Pakistan's Sectarian Monster" *South Asia Times Online*. June 8, 2005. Retrieved May 31, 2006 from [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/GF08Df01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/GF08Df01.html), 4.

<sup>193</sup> Mir, *Pakistan's Sectarian Monster*. 2.

<sup>194</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal, Retrieved 21 November 2006, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm#> .

and the Iranian Revolution are important in understanding Pakistan's *madrassas* today. Zia's program to standardize Sunni Islam throughout Pakistan benefited *madrassas* by creating job opportunities for graduates and funding from the state. This program also resulted in increased political activism by the Shia to protect their beliefs and ideology from encroachment by the government. This led to increased sectarian tensions between Sunni and Shia, which were further exploited by Iran and Saudi Arabia. These countries began supporting *madrassas* in Pakistan as part of a proxy war on Islamic ideology. At the same time, along Pakistan's western border, jihadist were establishing indoctrination and militant training centers, which they called *madrassas*, to support the insurgency against Communism in neighboring Afghanistan. These internal and external forces greatly influenced Pakistani religious political parties and *madrassas* toward militancy.

A review of *madrassa* support to militant activities shows a strong tendency to focus on local and regional issues. Currently available information shows limited involvement with the Global Jihadist movement. *Madrassa* students may be inclined to support the idea, but few have been known to actually participate. *Madrassa* involvement with regional and local sectarian violence is much more prevalent. Involvement in Kashmir and Afghanistan seems to have been initially directed by the Pakistani intelligence service. As the Taliban in Afghanistan showed, these organizations quickly moved beyond Pakistan's ability to control them. The involvement with regional violence and, to a lesser extent with trans-national terrorism, should generated concern about *madrassas*, especially from Pakistan's neighbors. The greater concern, however, should be the potential threat *madrassas* pose to Pakistan through sectarian violence.

Pakistani sectarian violence is proving to be as much about politics and power as a struggle over religion. The real goal of sectarian violence in Pakistan is to increase a group's political space. Additionally, Nasr argues that these groups use "sectarianism as a means to financial ends"<sup>195</sup> to garner more

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<sup>195</sup> Nasr, "Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan" 152.

support from internal and external supporters. *Madrassas* have been brought in to this struggle because they are “recruiting and training grounds for religio-political activist organizations”<sup>196</sup>. Another troubling indication is that sectarianism has both an inter-sect and intra-sect aspect in Pakistan. Many scholars and Pakistanis argue the inclusion of refutation of other sects believes *madrassas*’ curriculum conditions students toward intolerance and perpetuates sectarianism. Given the close-to-home focus of *madrassa* involvement with militancy, there is very little to evidence to support former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld’s assertion that *madrassas* are producing trans-national terrorists. Of greater concern is the threat these groups and their *madrassas* pose to the future of Pakistan.

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<sup>196</sup> Nasr, “Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan” 152.

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## V. AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE OF *MADRASSAS*

### A. INTRODUCTION

The general perspective of Americans regarding Pakistani *madrassas* may be understood as one of distrust and fear that these organizations are producing radical Islamists and global jihadists. As mentioned earlier in Chapter I, both former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that *madrassas* were indeed a direct threat and a “breeding ground” for terrorists. Numerous media reports and academic papers reinforced this idea to the American public and *madrassas* have become almost synonymous with *jihad factories*. However, some skeptics began to challenge the accuracy of this perception in asserting that the American focus on *madrassas* was misplaced and the danger overstated. Evidence appears to be on their side, and perhaps the fear of *madrassas* and their graduates is merely reactionary and alarmist in the aftermath of 9/11. Before looking at these competing American contemporary views, we must first examine the historical perspectives of Pakistani *madrassas* that predate September 11, 2001.

We will begin our examination of the American perspective with a brief primer of *madrassas* in British colonial India in order to establish a “Western view” of religious education in India. This will help the reader understand how Western thoughts on the subject of separation of church and state applied to a large Muslim population where little existed to separate the two establishments. This will be followed by a brief examination of the American perspective from 1947 to 1979, which showed little U.S. concern over the growing Islamization within Pakistan. The third section will describe the U.S. interest in *madrassas* after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent rise of the Taliban. Here, the U.S. saw *madrassas* and Islam as a useful tool in providing a buttress to communist expansion. The Taliban would prove the liability of this utilitarian perception after the Soviet retreat and subsequent Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The final section will describe the U.S. perception of *madrassas* from 9/11 to the present, showing the demonization of *madrassas* in the American media. The

latter part of this section will show that the American perception of *madrassas* essentially being jihad factories as depicted in numerous reports and essays is overstated and unsupported.

## **B. EARLY PERSPECTIVES OF MADRASSAS IN COLONIAL INDIA**

Western perceptions of Islamic education in South Asia dates back to British India, well before Partition and creation of Pakistan. Beginning in earnest in the mid nineteenth century, the British were responsible for bringing modernity into contact with Islam with regard to education in South Asia.<sup>197</sup> The results of this acquaintance served to establish a perception in the British rule that education in the Indian sub-continent was in need of regulation and reform, particularly religion and its place in education. The British established a parallel public and private education system as well as curriculum additions for many *madrassas*.<sup>198</sup> The curriculum was to be one of more “useful learning” that would result in skills applicable to employment in the modern world, not the simple and limiting religious education that left one ill-prepared for jobs in the empire.<sup>199</sup> In the eyes of British colonial rulers, religion was to be a separate and personal endeavor and should play little, if any, role in formal education or governance—certainly the result of European Enlightenment and the evolution of a reduced role for the church in state government and governance. Muhammad Qasim Zaman of Brown University quoted Talal Asad’s argument of this, stating:

...developments in modern Europe, and especially the impact of the Enlightenment, have led not merely to the subordination of religion to the state or the confinement of the former to the sphere of “private” life but also to “the construction of religion as a new historical object: anchored in personal experience, expressible as belief-statements, dependent on private institutions, and practiced

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<sup>197</sup> Aziz Talbani, “Pedagogy, Power, and Discourse: Transformation of Islamic Education” *Comparative Education Review*, 72-3, February 1996. Retrieved September 12, 2006 from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4086%28199602%2940%3A1%3C66%3APPADTO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23>.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>199</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: The Madrasa in British India and Pakistan,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April 1999. Retrieved September 12, 2006 from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4175%28199904%2941%3A2%3C294%3AREATRO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>.

in one's spare time. This construction of religion ensures that it is *inessential* to our common politics, economy, science, and morality."<sup>200</sup>

Zaman goes on to discuss the British contemplation of the dangers and horrors that Europe endured before there was a clear delineation between what was deemed religious and what was deemed secular or non-religious. Without such reform, the British assumed India would be in danger of experiencing religious "horrors" and economic stagnation. Therefore the British would seek to reduce the role of religion in public life and governance in India, boding certain challenges for the Indian *madrassas*.<sup>201</sup>

As religious schools, Indian *madrassas* were encouraged, and in some cases required, by the British colonial rulers to teach secular subjects.<sup>202</sup> This ran counter to the primary objective of *madrassa* education noted in earlier chapters and may have been an underpinning of what Samuel Huntington termed a "clash of civilizations," the theory that conflicts arise along cultural and religious lines between nations and groups of different civilizations.<sup>203</sup> The secular education the British sought in India perhaps undervalued the place of religion in the life of India's Muslims. The tensions between the Indian and British (secular) models of education would surface throughout British rule and beyond.

The Muslim scholar Taqi Uthmani espoused what many Muslims believed: that secularism was the path of unbelievers because it limits religion to the private life and this is not the path Muslims should take.<sup>204</sup> This was reflected in the Muslim view of education. Modern Western states like Britain had debated and reconciled, at least for themselves, the place and role of religion in their lives, and imparted this secular view and model of education into the Indian

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<sup>200</sup> Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform."

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Wikipedia, "Clash of Civilizations," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, October 2006. Retrieved October 21, 2006 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clash\\_of\\_Civilizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clash_of_Civilizations).

<sup>204</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2002. 104-105.

education system. However, no such debate or reconciliation on religion and the state had ever taken place in the realm of Islam, nor had it been necessary as Islam provided Muslims with politics, economics, science and religion—altogether inseparable from each other.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, education reform that included a level of secularization of *madrassas* would likely always be challenged and breed much resentment from Indian, and later Pakistani, Muslims.<sup>206</sup> This is not to say that the British did not have any appreciation for this challenge.

The British were not altogether out of touch with the place and role that *madrassas* held in India and were not intent on removing religious teachings from them; they mostly wanted to add secular subjects to the Islamic sciences.<sup>207</sup> This sort of cultural intrusion into an important aspect of Muslim life was not seen as necessary or beneficial by many, if not most, *madrassas* and their Muslim scholars (ulama); however, the British attempts to mold the colony into one of a more Western form would not cease until the independence of India and partition of Pakistan in 1947.

The British and therefore Western view of *madrassas* was one of an outdated system that could lead to the same violence and misuse that had occurred in Europe in the name of religion and therefore required reform. European Enlightenment had given the British a design for where religion belonged in life and had shown a capacity for spurring modernization and technological gain. *Madrassas* as they existed in India were therefore an archaic entity and not particularly well-suited for modernizing the state, government, and commerce. With this in mind, it is logical to assume that a uniquely American

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<sup>205</sup> Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, Penguin Books, New York, 2004, 6-7.

<sup>206</sup> It is important to distinguish between education reform of the existing Indian public education system and that of *madrassas*. *Madrassa* reform was considered under the British plans for public education reform and secularization, but the attempts to reform them were less so than that of the public education system itself, but represent a significant cultural misunderstanding by the British that outsiders could have such sway on Islamic education.

<sup>207</sup> Zaman, "Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform," 301.



perspective of *madrassas* would have followed this same line of thought of the dangers of purely religious education and the separation of religion from other spheres of life.

### **C. 1947 TO 1970S**

Western or American perspectives of Pakistani *madrassas* during immediate Pakistani post-independence until the Iranian Revolution and Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan are rather difficult to discern. A search of the *ProQuest* database of scholarly articles prior to 1980 that reference “Pakistan and seminaries,” “Pakistan and education,” “Pakistan and *Madrassas* (Madarsi, *madrassa*, *madrassah*, *madrassa*),” yielded only a few articles, none of any real use in explaining American perceptions of Pakistani education or *madrassas*. The same may be said of a similar search using the *JSTOR* database, which yielded only 23 related articles, few of which gave any hint of the American view of Pakistani *madrassas*. The same keyword searches and timeline used to search the *Nexis* database yielded zero news articles in U.S. newspapers and wires. Similar searches in other databases yielded little as well. This is not to say that the U.S. had no interest in Pakistan’s education system or *madrassas*, but that such interest, if it existed, was ancillary to the U.S. interest in Islam and Pakistan.

The U.S. courted Pakistan as an ally soon after the latter gained independence as a separate nation.<sup>208</sup> The reasons for this were succinctly put forth by Stephen Philip Cohen who stated:

Washington turned to Pakistan in the early 1950s when India chose nonalignment, and Pakistan, desperate for outside support, eagerly reciprocated. Islam was assumed to confer a natural immunity to communism; Pakistan was at once both explicitly Muslim and between the world’s two great communist powers.<sup>209</sup>

While this assessment does not connote a perspective or opinion of *madrassas* or education in Pakistan as such, it does point out the utility the U.S. saw in Islam

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<sup>208</sup> K. Alan Kronstat, “Pakistan-U.S. Relations,” *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, July 3, 2003. Retrieved September 10, 2006 from <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/22732.pdf>.

<sup>209</sup> Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2004, 302.

and a Muslim nation as tools for containment of communism and the Soviet agenda. It is through this assertion that the U.S. perspective specifically regarding *madrassas* would later come into focus. However, there is little to suggest that *madrassas* themselves were in any way creeping into American thoughts until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan was “checkered” prior to the Soviet incursion into Pakistan’s neighbor. At times, U.S. economic and military aid to Pakistan was quite robust, totaling \$508 million by 1961 and eventually over \$11 billion by 2000.<sup>210</sup> However, these outlays were not designated for education reform and many were cut off during periods of disagreement, such as Pakistan’s pursuit of nuclear weapons (1977–1979), war with India (1947–48, 1965 and 1971), and the Kashmir dispute with India (on-again, off-again). Obviously the U.S. was preoccupied with military and economic concerns and little if any attention was paid to education within Pakistan. If one were to presuppose an American opinion of *madrassas* during this time, it would be logical in light of all of the above to assume that it would have been one of support. If Islam were truly to be a buttress to communist expansion, then Islamic religious education would only reinforce that desirable objective. Such an occidental view of a spiritually significant tenet of Muslim culture, while viewed as potentially dangerous today, would not have seemed too concerning at the time and the extreme growth of *madrassas* would have followed that same opinion.

Pakistan’s *madrassas* grew rapidly in numbers from the late 1950s until 1971, and secular subjects were fading if not absent from most schools. The introduction of secular subjects was attempted by General Ayub Khan from the late 1950s until 1971; however, this reform effort would go unnoticed by the U.S., as would the “Islamization” of Pakistan and the accelerated growth of *madrassas* that followed under General Zia-ul-Haq.<sup>211</sup> True interest in these religious

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<sup>210</sup> Kronstat, July 3, 2003.

<sup>211</sup> Ali, 31.

schools would only come to the attention of the Americans after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but recognition of the dangers of this development were still years away.

#### **D. SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND RISE OF THE TALIBAN**

1979 was a turbulent year on the world stage. The Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan served to garner much of America's interest. While the Iranian revolution prompted Saudi Arabia to fund more Sunni *madrassas* in Pakistan to counter the increase in Shia influence in the region, it was the Soviet-Afghan war that prompted the U.S. to examine *madrassas* as a part of the resistance to Soviet aggression.<sup>212</sup> The use of *madrassas* and *mujahideen* was perhaps culturally ignorant by the U.S. in that it was viewed primarily in utilitarian terms and not for the significance this could have in the long-term or strategic picture.

The International Crisis Group outlined one of the roles Pakistani *madrassas* and U.S. involvement played in recruiting *mujahideen* to wage a holy war against the Soviets:

Special textbooks were published in Dari and Pashtu, designed by the Centre for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska-Omaha under a USAID grant in the early 1980s. Written by American Afghanistan experts and anti-Soviet Afghan educators, they aimed at promoting jihadi values and militant training among Afghans. USAID paid the University of Nebraska U.S. \$51 million from 1984 to 1994 to develop and design these textbooks, which were mostly printed in Pakistan. Over 13 million were distributed at Afghan refugee camps and Pakistani *madrassa* [sic] "where students learnt basic math by counting dead Russians and Kalashnikov rifles."<sup>213</sup>

In 1981, the U.S. pledged over \$3 billion in economic and military aid to Pakistan and an additional \$4 billion over the following six years, with some of those funds finding their way to Deobandi *madrassas* courtesy of General Zia.<sup>214</sup> The Soviet

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<sup>212</sup> Abigail Cutler and Saleem Ali, "Madrasah reform is Key to the War on Terror," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 27, 2005. Retrieved October 4, 2006 from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0627/p09s02-coop.html>.

<sup>213</sup> International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Madrasas Extremism and the Military,"

<sup>214</sup> Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*. Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, England, 2005. 115, 140.

threat dwarfed any concern by the U.S. that support of *madrassas* would become problematic, if not directly threatening in the future. The cold war perception of a monolithic Soviet horde marching across south Asia gave a certain “cowboy” type persona to the *mujahideen*—a classic underdog fighting against incredible odds—the God-fearing fighting the Godless, all of which had a distinct appeal to the American culture. Ronald Reagan praised the *mujahideen* openly in 1985 at the White House, referring to them as the “...moral equivalents of America’s founding fathers.”<sup>215</sup> This was a strong endorsement for Islamic fighters, many of whom were educated and radicalized in the *madrassas* of Pakistan. The apparent preoccupation with the Soviet threat led the Reagan administration, and later Bill Clinton’s administration, to ignore the consequences of supporting radical Islamists and the resultant increasing number of *madrassas*.<sup>216</sup> The fact that the same hatred that *jihadists* and *mujahideen* had for the Soviets was appearing against the West, and the U.S. in particular, did not register much concern by the U.S.

After the retreat of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in February 1989, the U.S. lost interest in Pakistani *madrassas* and the *mujahideen*.<sup>217</sup> However, many *mujahideen* did not lose interest in continuing the Jihad, and the newly established *madrassas* sought to continue their existence and spread their influence and numbers as well. Islamization of Pakistan and the radicalization of many *madrassas*, especially in the tribal, frontier and border areas, continued and was exacerbated by the crumbling and decaying public education system as noted in previous chapters. This permissive environment gave increasing rise to the radical Taliban and Pakistani underwriting of Taliban accession of rule over Afghanistan in 1996. America’s short attention span had been turned to the falling of the Berlin wall and Soviet collapse, proclaiming victory over communism—and, in reference to Pakistan, one of nuclear containment.

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<sup>215</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, “Good Muslim – Bad Muslim: An African Perspective,” *American Anthropologist*, September 2002. Retrieved September 5, 2006 from <http://www.jstor.org>.

<sup>216</sup> Cohen, 303.

<sup>217</sup> Cohen, 304.

The Taliban's actions in Afghanistan in the 1990s and their eventual capture of Kabul in 1996 began to refocus American attention on the by-products of radicalization and Islamization in Pakistan. Links to Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda were established during this time period, as was the *madrassa* education of many of the Taliban leaders.<sup>218</sup> This was perhaps the beginning of the change in opinion from one of utility of underwriting radicalization and the romantic cowboy notion of the *mujahideen* to one of concern over national security and regional stability. Taliban interpretations of Islam were harsh, narrow, and radical, and led the Taliban to harbor al-Qaeda within Afghanistan. Many *mujahideen* who were waging *jihad* in Kashmir and India were linked to *madrassas* and subsequent radicalization. However, perception of *madrassas* would not truly transform en masse until after 9/11, although there were strong indications from some American scholars and writers that trouble may be on the horizon.

In November of 2000, Jessica Stern, a lecturer at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, outlined the potential threat the Pakistani *madrassas* system had become, both Pakistan and the international community, in her essay "*Pakistan's Jihad Culture*." Her analysis clearly concluded that 10 to 15 percent of Pakistan's 40,000 to 50,000 *madrassas* promote extremism and militancy and that such militancy was exporting *jihad* worldwide.<sup>219</sup> These sentiments were echoed in *The New Yorker* when Jeffery Goldberg traveled to Pakistan and deduced that many *madrassas* were "jihad factories" harboring resentment for the West and the U.S., admiration for Osama Bin Laden, and a strong belief in a radical form of Islam and jihad.<sup>220</sup> Clearly a more relevant and pressing perspective of *madrassas* in Pakistan was creeping into the American psyche. Policymakers in Washington had already begun dissecting the Taliban to discern what they really wanted and how they evolved. It was becoming

<sup>218</sup> 9-11 Commission, "The 9/11 Commission Report," *The U.S. Government Printing Office*. Retrieved October 3, 2006 from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/pdf/fullreport.pdf>.

<sup>219</sup> Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2000. Retrieved October 3, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

<sup>220</sup> Jefferey Golberg, "The Education of a Holy Warrior," *New York Times Magazine*, June 25, 2000. Retrieved September 21, 2006, from <http://proquest.com>.

apparent that conditions in Pakistan, to include *madrassas*, were no longer the once valued buffer against communism expansion, but rather a permissive environment for Islamic militancy and terrorism.

In summary, American perception of Pakistani *madrassas* during this period remained primarily utilitarian and self-serving in the fight against communism. Once communism was gone, so was much of the American involvement in Pakistan. Additionally, the classic American compassion for, and applauding of, an underdog like the *mujahideen* against the Soviet giant played well to American sensibilities, dulling any sensitivity that this could backfire. The lack of cultural understanding of Islam and the Muslim state of Pakistan was therefore evident. There was no “off-switch” for the type of *madrassa* education the U.S. had helped to create. American interest in *madrassas* and jihadists was slowly changing to one of real concern, and the events on September 11, 2001, would soon force a more detailed analysis of Pakistani *madrassas*.

#### **E. 9/11 TO THE PRESENT**

Immediately after the shock of 9/11, Americans began an earnest effort to find the reasons for the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Numerous theories were espoused and terrorist experts flocked to the airwaves and government to explain the basis for the terrorist assault. Among the explanations was Islam itself and the radicalization of Muslims through Islamic education. The latter was of particular interest in light of the exponential increase in the numbers of *madrassas* that appeared in Pakistan in the last 30 years. These two variables would help explain the contemporary American perceptions of *madrassas*, which may be described as everything from jihad factories to seminaries that teach little else than *Qur’anic* verse.

Barely a month after 9/11, U.S. newspapers, wire services, and other media began to target *madrassas* as a cause of Islamic extremism. The front pages of the *New York Times* read “Shaping Young Islamic Hearts and Hatreds,” a story outlining the intolerance, *jihad*, and hatred of the West and the U.S. that

was taught in many Pakistani *madrassas* in particular.<sup>221</sup> Similar stories and others addressing *madrassas* surfaced. A database search of U.S. newspapers and wire services using the *Nexis* database for the word *madrassa* (also spelled *madrassah* and *madrassa*) from 11 September 2001 to 10 September 2002 yielded a total of 1,183 articles.<sup>222</sup> Adding the word “Pakistan” to the search yielded 991 articles. The same search of *Nexis* for the year prior to 9/11 listed only 97 articles. A similar search in the *JSTOR* database for the year after 9/11 yielded 20 scholarly articles or publications, and using the same search in the *ProQuest* database yielded slightly more articles and papers. In the first year after the attacks, the word “*madrassa*” had obviously entered the American lexicon. In many articles, the linkage of extremism and terrorism to Pakistani *madrassas* in particular was strengthening. Equally as important was a broader awakening of America to the religion of Islam, which would certainly affect the perceptions Americans would have of Islamic education.

Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin Laden headed the suspect list post 9/11 and in Bin Laden’s taped message released in October 2001, he thanked God for the attacks and the fear it instilled in Americans.<sup>223</sup> He viewed America and Americans as morally corrupt infidels and used Islam as his justification for celebration and approval of the attacks. Assertions that this was a religious war and a clash of civilizations began to flood U.S. media as Islam came to the forefront of American interest.

A search for the word “terror” and “Islam” (or Islamic, or Islamism) in the *Nexis* database for the period of 11 September 2000 to 10 September 2001 (one year) yielded 1,545 articles in U.S. newspapers and wire services in pre 9/11 America. The same search for 11 September 2001 to 10 September 2002 yielded more articles than the database was able to present for that time period (over 3,000). Refining the search to just one month post 9/11 yielded the same

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<sup>221</sup> Rick Bragg, “Shaping Young Islamic Hearts and Hatreds,” *The New York Times*, October 14, 2001. Retrieved September 21, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

<sup>222</sup> The same search using only *major* U.S. newspapers yielded 924 results.

<sup>223</sup> Associated Press, “Bin Laden: U.S. Full of Fear,” *Journal Sentinel*, October 7, 2001. Retrieved September 21 from <http://www2.jsonline.com/news/attack/oct01/binladen100701.asp>.

result, over 3,000 articles. The same search in the *JSTOR* database for one year prior to 9/11 yielded 34 scholarly articles, while the year after 9/11 yielded 52. Again, the same search in the *ProQuest* database search yielded 72 pre 9/11 articles on Islam and terror and 986 post 9/11 articles of the same. Americans were beginning to inform themselves exponentially about the religion and possible motives for the 9/11 attacks. Although, this is not to say that the question of Islam and the West had not come up before.

One of the nation's foremost scholars on the Middle East and well-versed in Islam, Bernard Lewis, had outlined what he called the "roots of Muslim rage" in an article of the same name in the *Atlantic Journal* in 1990. The article was quickly republished in late 2001 and certainly with far greater readership in light of 9/11. Lewis briefly traced the history of Islam from its rise and dominance to its decline where he found numerous reasons for Muslim discontent and hatred of the West and U.S. The general inability of Muslims to reconcile Islam with modernity had frustrated them tremendously as they had been radically outpaced by the rise of the West and the U.S.<sup>224</sup> This was often viewed as humiliating by many Muslims who recounted the glory days of Islam and Muslim rule over the "infidel." Hence, many Muslims had serious displeasure and angst in accepting the ascendancy and dominance of the infidel (West) in the world today.<sup>225</sup> When this is combined with a view of the West, and the U.S. in particular, as an imperialist, soulless and morally bankrupt secular society that supports Israel, it can only add volatile fuel to the fire of Muslim rage. Lewis admitted that these views were not common to all Muslims and many maintained favorable views of the West, but his narrative presented much for Americans to question about Islam. Numerous other studies advised that certain sects or interpretations of Islam were quite prone to breeding extremism and mobilizing action resulting in

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<sup>224</sup> Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Policy*, vol. 17 no. 4, Summer 2001-2002. Retrieved September 8, 2006 from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/533230/posts>.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.



violence and sometimes terrorism. A view of radical Islam was now taking shape and the most recent example prior to 9/11 was found in the Taliban in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, the U.S. view of *madrassas*, and consequently some forms of Islam, was beginning to change, especially after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan and began a brutal reign based on a narrow interpretation of Islam and enforcement of Islamic codes, Shari'a law and extra judicial measures. When this collided with 9/11 and the assertion of justification of the attacks based on an extremist interpretation of Islam, the American public and policy makers did not have far to go in arriving at some disturbing notions about Islam itself.

Leading the way was perhaps Bin Laden and al-Qaeda which had already demanded U.S. attention in 1998 through their bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In that aftermath, Bin Laden declared it was permissible to kill not just American infidels but also other Muslims in pursuit of *jihad*.<sup>226</sup> Islam was receiving a tainted reputation courtesy of the Taliban and Bin Laden, not to mention others around the Muslim world. Although blanket condemnation of Islam in the U.S. was derided after 9/11 and offense to the Muslim allies and friends of the U.S. was minimized by many U.S. leaders and organizations, an indelible mark had been placed in the American psyche that now linked Islam to a greater proclivity towards extremism and violence.

In a Pew Research Center survey released in September 2004, American's perceptions of Islam was found to be an almost even divide between those that had a favorable view of Islam and those that had an unfavorable view of Islam.<sup>227</sup> However, the same survey saw a significant rise in the opinion that Islam was more likely to encourage violence. In 2002, only 25 percent of Americans thought Islam was prone to encourage violence, almost doubling to

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<sup>226</sup> 9-11 Commission.

<sup>227</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Plurality Sees Islam as More Likely to Encourage Violence: Views of Islam Remain Sharply Divided," *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, September 9, 2004. Retrieved September 17, 2006 from <http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/islam.pdf>.

46 percent in 2004.<sup>228</sup> In July of 2005, the Pew Research Center reported that 67 percent of Americans surveyed viewed Islam as the most violent religion, far outpacing Christianity and Judaism.<sup>229</sup> The same report contrasts the preceding with the finding that 57 percent of Americans had a favorable opinion of Muslim people, suggesting that the problem is viewed more as one of religion than one of those who actually practice that religion. In short, Americans saw Islam as a larger problem than Muslims themselves. The vast majority of Muslims appeared to be moderate and tolerant, only the extremists were the real problem. Therefore America sought to find the source of this extremism and in short order married it to Islamic education in Pakistani *madrassas*.

Gregory Starrett, a professor at the University of North Carolina, proclaimed that the very word *madrassa* "...can send a shudder up the post-9/11 spine..."<sup>230</sup> As noted in earlier chapters the form of education many *madrassas* conveyed was a barrier to modernity, suppressed creativity, and bred bigotry – all of which were defining characteristics of *madrassas*.<sup>231</sup> Some initial reports as early as October 2001 estimated that Pakistani *madrassas* were producing hundreds of thousands of potential terrorists, with one claiming *madrassas* were potentially responsible for turning out over 4.5 million of the "cadre" America will face in the global war on terror.<sup>232</sup> Thomas Friedman's travels through Peshawar, Pakistan, in November 2001 led him to describe it as "bin Laden land."<sup>233</sup> He briefly chronicled his experience at the same mosque that trained Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar and found the teaching of an antiquated

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<sup>228</sup> Pew Research Center, "Plurality Sees Islam as More Likely to Encourage Violence."

<sup>229</sup> The Pew Research Center, "Support for Terror Wanes among Muslim Publics Islamic extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics," July 14, 2005. Retrieved September 21, 2006 from <http://pewresearch.org>.

<sup>230</sup> Gregory Starrett, "The American Interest in Islamic Schooling: A Misplaced Emphasis?," *Middle East Policy*, Spring 2006. Retrieved October 8, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

<sup>231</sup> Looney, 264.

<sup>232</sup> Phillip Smucker and Michael Satchell, "Hearts and Minds ; In Pakistan's religious schools, tomorrow's holy warriors are prepped for conflict; Pakistan," *U.S. News and World Report*, October 15, 2001. Retrieved October 7, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

<sup>233</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "In Pakistan, Its Jihad 101," *New York Time*, November 13, 2001. Retrieved September 12, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

curriculum established in 1707, no secular subjects, and an intense dislike for America and Americans.<sup>234</sup> *Madrassas* had clearly been penetrated by radical Islam.<sup>235</sup> Their curriculum was thought to be archaic, intolerant, and bent on jihad. These and other accounts and reports in news media and scholarly journals helped to broadly determine the U.S. perception that a plurality, if not a majority, of *madrassas* were essentially “jihad factories.” *Madrassas* themselves were perhaps thought to be a cause of extremism and not merely a symptom of Islamism that had permeated much of the Pakistani state and society. Islam, Islamism, and *madrassas* had congealed into a very palpable threat in the general U.S. view.

Tempering this perception of *madrassas* were surveys conducted of Pakistani families in 1991, 1998, and 2001 which showed that less than 1 percent of enrolled students attended *madrassas* full time, though attendance was higher in Baluchistan and the NWFP.<sup>236</sup> These numbers were echoed in a march 2005 John F. Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Paper, suggesting that the numbers of militants and extremists from *madrassas* may be grossly overestimated.<sup>237</sup> The actual number of radical or extremist *madrassas* is also in question and assumed to be quite low. The Pakistani government estimates that only 10 percent to 15 percent of Pakistani *madrassas* produce militants or extremists, though they admit the numbers may be unreliable.<sup>238</sup> Consequently, there is no data to establish actual attendance and graduation rates for these radical *madrassas*. However, even if the number of radical *madrassas* is higher than estimated, are the graduates they are producing a threat to the U.S.?

As noted in Chapter IV, what data exists for the plurality of all *madrassas* in Pakistan suggests that such schools cater slightly more to the poor, especially

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<sup>234</sup> Friedman.

<sup>235</sup> Alex Alexiev, “The Pakistani Time Bomb,” *Commentary*, March 2003. Retrieved November 1, 2006 from <http://proquest.com>.

<sup>236</sup> Fair, *Islamic Education in Pakistan*, 3.

<sup>237</sup> Andrabi, et al., 23.

<sup>238</sup> Looney, 262.

where there is no other alternative for receiving an education.<sup>239</sup> This may be offset in some degree by the tradition of some families to devote at least one male child to religious service.<sup>240</sup> This helps account for other income levels that choose a *madrassa* education for their child or children. However, it may be inferred that the majority of children enrolled in *madrassas* are from poor families, as they make up the largest strata of Pakistani society and are more likely to live in areas where no other educational alternative exists. Furthermore, the education these *madrassa* students receive is not likely to qualify them for transnational terrorism directed at the U.S. or elsewhere. "Given the general dearth of secular subjects (math, English, sciences) *madrassa* students (without mainstream education) are not likely to be desirable to many terrorist groups, especially when higher quality recruits are available"<sup>241</sup> Marc Sageman's analysis of over 100 jihadists and the 9/11 attackers showed they mostly came from middle to upper class families, had primarily secular educations, and achieved some level of college education with over 40 percent holding a bachelors degree or higher.<sup>242</sup> This is certainly not the primary demographic that Pakistani *madrassas* were attracting or graduating. What some *madrassas* do graduate may be students who are less tolerant and more prone to violence and support of terrorism<sup>243</sup>, if only at the local and regional level. Even so, the American perception of *madrassas* may largely ignore or be unaware of these findings.

With this in mind, post September 11 American foreign policy has been implemented to deal with the perceived problem of *madrassas*. The overwhelming thrust of U.S. policy is towards increasing access to public and private education, thereby reducing the lure of *madrassas*. Competition in the education marketplace and continued pressure and support to Musharraf to bring

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<sup>239</sup> Andrabi, et al., 22.

<sup>240</sup> Nayyar, 234.

<sup>241</sup> Fair, *Islamic Education in Pakistan*.

<sup>242</sup> Sageman, 74-76.

<sup>243</sup> Fair, *Islamic Education in Pakistan*.

*madrassas* under some level of government control and/or monitoring is how the U.S indirectly seeks to marginalize and isolate the extremist *madrassas*. This will certainly be a daunting challenge considering the level of permeation *madrassas* systems and *madrassa* advocates have achieved in Pakistani society and government. Leading the way in this challenge is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with a five year, \$100 million bilateral agreement (signed in August 2002) to increase access to quality education throughout Pakistan, with an emphasis on the Baluchistan and Sindh provinces.<sup>244</sup> Interestingly, the U.S. approach does not aim to remove any religious teaching in any type of school in Pakistan; it simply seeks to add secular, modern subjects to the curriculum. This is typical of the historical British approach to education reform in colonial India. The British were not very successful then and there is little reason to believe the USAID efforts will be more successful now.

*Madrassas* should not be overly concerning to the American public. We have seen that the perception of Pakistani *madrassas* as jihad factories that directly threaten the U.S. has been grossly overstated and unsupported.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

While it has been hard to discern if there was truly an American perception of *madrassas* that pre-dates 9/11, it has been seen that at least a Western interest in *madrassas* was established during the British colonial period. The British saw *madrassas* as in need of reform and adding too much religion into the public life. This concerned the British and concerns the U.S. today, as militant Islam appears to be increasing in Pakistan.

The U.S. government began to see Islam as a buttress to communist expansion and *madrassas* played a part in producing the mujahideen used to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. This support, and then the abrupt U.S. abandonment of the mujahideen and *madrassas* after the defeat of the Soviets in

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<sup>244</sup> Kronstadt, "Education Reform in Pakistan."

1989, played into the Islamization efforts of Pakistan. *Madrassas* flourished and some became radicalized and used to support mostly regional sectarian conflict, while some others contributed to public support for extremism and terrorism.

After 9/11, the American body politic became aware of *madrassas* as they were implicated in spreading terrorism. American perception and that of the American government turned from a utilitarian view of *madrassas* supporting the fight against communism to seeing *madrassas* as jihad factories in desperate need of reform. The view of Islam as promoting violence, the existing Islamization of Pakistan, and the attention given to *madrassas* in the media and academia led Americans to view *madrassas* as extremist institutions that produce radical mujahideen bent on attacking the U.S.

Closer scrutiny strongly suggests that there is little evidence to backup the level of threat that these *madrassas* have come to bear in the American mind. While it is certain that there are radical *madrassas* that indoctrinate hatred and intolerance, they pose little if any ability to threaten the U.S. directly or indirectly. The actual numbers of these radical *madrassas* is unknown and suspected to be no more than 10–15 percent of all *madrassas* in Pakistan. The attendance levels for all *madrassas* is estimated at less than 1 percent of enrolled students and therefore the numbers of *jihadists* that these schools produce also appears to be inflated. Additionally, the *jihadists* from Pakistani *madrassas* do not fit the profile of transnational terrorists that pose a threat to the U.S.; they pose more of threat to internal Pakistan and the region.

Even if America clings to the perception that *madrassas* are a large and viable threat, it must also contend with the perception that any reform attempts from “outsiders” and infidels will be met with skepticism and resistance by Pakistani Muslims, no matter how indirectly the U.S. approaches the problem. This is much the same dilemma the British faced in colonial India. Even the prescribed curriculum reform may hold few, if any, promises for reducing intolerance and may diminish focus on other contributing factors:

Rewriting books is easier than changing fundamental social, economic and political institutions with powerful constituencies...because curriculum reform without reform of infrastructure political participation and economic opportunity will do nothing to stem internal and external conflicts that do far more than schools to create violent motivations.<sup>245</sup>

The above quote from University of North Carolina Professor Gregory Starrett asserts that there is more to stemming Islamic extremism and terrorism than simply addressing curricula in radical *madrassas*. The religious, political, social, and economic environment of Pakistan and the perspective of Pakistanis will determine any level of success. Given that *madrassas* have been shown to pose little if any direct threat to the security of U.S., more emphasis in this area would be exceedingly misplaced.

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<sup>245</sup> Starrett, 129.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, *madrassas* are as varied as the manner in which Islam is practiced. At their most basic level, *madrassas* of today differ little from their historical predecessors. Their curriculum seeks to maintain the purity of Islam as it is passed from one generation of clergy to another through the use of classic Islamic texts taught in their original Arabic and Persian. This classic education is mixed with the rhetoric and Islamic creeds of the various sects and sub-sects to serve as a method to transfers each sect's distinct beliefs to future generations. This continuity and transfer of Islam to the next generation of Muslim clergy is essentially what *madrassa* were designed to accomplish.

Yet, the question posed to by then Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to senior Department of Defense officials in the October 2003 memorandum asking about a link between *madrassas* and Islamic extremists persists. In the end, former Secretary Rumsfeld's question is not easily answered by a simple yes or no. Perhaps former CIA Director George Tenet was mostly correct when he described *madrassas* as producing "foot soldiers for many Islamic militant groups that operate throughout the Muslim world."<sup>246</sup> Could Owais Tohid be correct when he argues *madrassas* are becoming the new recruiting and training grounds for the next generation al-Qaeda leaders?<sup>247</sup> Maybe the most important issue concerning *madrassa* in Pakistan was defined by Maulana Samiul Haq, headmaster of the Taliban supporting Haqqania *Madrassa*, when he said, "Young minds are not for thinking. We catch them for the *madrassa* when they are young, and by the time they are old enough to think, they know what to think."<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Riaz, 2.

<sup>247</sup> Tohid, 1.

<sup>248</sup> Haqqani, "Islams Medieval Outposts," 63.

## **B. FINDINGS**

### **1. *Madrassas* and Trans-National Terrorism**

Despite repeated comments from Western policy makers to the contrary, currently available evidence indicates *madrassa* militancy has not made the jump to trans-national terrorism. Many argue the data is insufficient to put this concern to rest and the current studies which support this supposition are based on limited data. Even considering the actual factual information revealed by Marc Sageman that less 9 percent of the known al-Qaeda terrorists attended a *madrassa*, the point of connection common to more than 90 percent of al-Qaeda terrorists was involvement with the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan not attendance at a *madrassa*.<sup>249</sup>

### **2. *Madrassas'* Relationship to Regional and Sectarian Violence**

The contentious relationship between religion and politics contributes to regional violence between India and Pakistan in Kashmir and sectarian violence within Pakistan. While the information currently available doesn't substantiate a link between Pakistani *madrassas* and global terrorism, Chapter IV shows connections between some *madrassas* and regional and sectarian violence is clearly evident. Whether it is LeT jihadist attacking Indian forces in support of Pakistani political objectives in Kashmir, Sunni attacking Shi'a in Baluchistan, or Deobandi rioting against Barelvi in Islamabad, numerous examples are available to show a systemic link between *madrassas* and violence at the sectarian and regional level. At the same time, it is important to consider that of the estimated 7,000 to 10,000 *madrassas* in Pakistan, approximately 350 but as many as 700 *madrassas* have links to or are known to participate with sectarian and regional jihadist groups.<sup>250</sup>

Another disconcerting issue that has arisen from the increased interest in *madrassas* is the inability to predict their potential impact on Pakistani society due the lack of quantifiable data as to the number of *madrassas*, their political orientation, and number of attending students. This lack of information results in

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<sup>249</sup> Sageman, 70.

<sup>250</sup> Rana, 586, 660, 661. Ali, 85.

reliance on best estimates with high probability of error. The scholar leading the World Bank's study on *madrassas* in Pakistan, Tahir Andrabi, noted that the colonial revolutionary T. E. Lawrence spoke of the power of a few committed revolutionaries in Arabia as follows: "give me 1 percent of the population and I will give you a revolution."<sup>251</sup> It's difficult to determine if Pakistan has reached the 1 percent revolutionary Islamist density while lacking the information on *madrassas* and their population.

### **3. Events Influencing Extremism in *Madrassas***

Virtually every study and report on *madrassa* militancy in Pakistan singles out 1979 as the year this transition began. The Iranian Revolution, 1978–79, served to revitalize Shi'a, resulting in increased Shi'a political involvement and assertiveness within Pakistan. This Shi'a re-awakening alarmed Sunnis, within Pakistan and in the Persian Gulf region. Some Sunni responded violently, reigniting the long-standing struggle between Sunni and Shi'a. Despite this, the Islamic world found a common cause when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. For the next nine years, Muslims from around the world were encouraged to support the struggle of Islamic fighters against the Soviet and Afghan Communist forces. This combined internal and external struggle served to create a new level of militancy in the region.

Pakistan became the epicenter of support to the fight between Islam and Communism in Afghanistan. while serving as a secondary battlefield in the struggle between Sunni and Shi'a Islam. Internally, the Pakistani government, lead by General Zia al-Haq, 1977–1982, began using religion as a means of legitimizing his military coup. The government improved its political power by serving as a conduit for U.S. funds to Afghan rebels and through patronage of various *madrassas* used to recruit fighters for the struggle against the Soviets. By the time the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989, many *madrassas* had matured in their militancy and gained prominence within Pakistani politics. These changes propelled *madrassas* from their historic role as centers of education to the indoctrination centers of Islamic extremism.

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<sup>251</sup> Ali, 11.

#### **4. The America Perception of *Madrassas***

The American perception of *madrassas* has been shaped by numerous events and beliefs. Early concerns over the impact that purely religious institutions may have on government and governance gave way to the utilitarian view of Islam and *madrassas* as a tool to repel Soviet communist expansion in the South Asia. This was later replaced by a perception of *madrassas* fueling jihadism and violence with the rise of the Taliban and the horrific events of 9\11. President Bush, high-ranking government officials, media, and academics painted a grim picture of *madrassas* as terrorist breeding grounds that pose a direct threat to U.S. security. This perception persists today. Though this view is not based in fact and has been shown to be much overstated, there is little to indicate that it will change anytime soon.

The U.S. government has pledged to support Pakistani efforts at reforming *madrassas* and dedicated millions of dollars to improve the greater public education system of Pakistan. The latter is where the U.S has focused its efforts, recognizing that any outside and Western attempt to effect the sacrosanct Islamic institutions of *madrassas* will surely fail.

Pakistan is a valuable ally in the GWOT and the U.S. recognizes the negative impact that a purely *madrassa* education has in preparing young Pakistanis to enter the modern workforce, as well as the destabilizing effect of radical *madrassas* in sectarian and regional violence. U.S. policy may therefore be aimed at reforming *madrassas* indirectly. However, such policy may have very little effect in reforming *madrassas* indirectly or otherwise.

#### **C. U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES**

Pakistan spends less than 2 percent of its GDP on education, significantly contributing to the country's near 60 percent illiteracy rate. Males receive an average of five years of schooling and females receive about 2.5 years with only two-thirds of eligible children ever enrolling in a school and only one-third of those children completing the fifth grade.<sup>252</sup> Embedded in these metrics are the purely religious educations that many *madrassas* provide, which are of little value

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<sup>252</sup> Kronstadt, 1.

outside employment in religious institutions, and the extremist educations provided by a minority of *madrassas* that are viewed to pose a direct threat to the U.S. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. rightly assumes that it will be wholly unable to directly address *madrassa* reform and therefore may be tackling the perceived problem through the improvement of the greater public education system in Pakistan. This policy approach appears to be reasonable and prudent way to influence and assist Pakistan in its own Education Sector Reform (ESR) initiatives, which attempt to address the above shortfalls.

The following excerpt from the 2004 Congressional Research Service Report entitled “Education Reform in Pakistan” outlines the initial U.S. policy towards assisting Pakistan in this endeavor:

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is implementing a five year, \$100 million bilateral agreement (signed in August 2002) to increase access to quality education throughout Pakistan, with an emphasis on the Baluchistan and Sindh provinces. Current USAID education-related projects in Pakistan include efforts to improve early education, engender democratic ideals, improve the quality of assessment and testing, provide training to educators, and construct or refurbish schools in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Yet the most notable project is Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA), which accounts for more than three-quarters of the USAID-reported \$77.7 million budgeted to date. In this project, USAID contracted with the North Carolina-based Research Triangle Institute to 1) strengthen education policies and planning; 2) increase the capacity of teachers and education administrators; 3) improve youth and adult literacy; 4) expand public-private partnerships to improve access to and delivery of education services; and 5) establish teaching methods that instill democratic attitudes and behaviors among children and educators and draw families into the life of the school community.<sup>253</sup>

This plan has been further supplemented in 2006 by an increase in U.S. funded education programs in Pakistan of \$100 million per year for the next five years.<sup>254</sup> This will bring the total outlay to over \$500 million by 2009. Nowhere in

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<sup>253</sup> Kronstadt, 4.

<sup>254</sup> South and Central Asian Affairs Bureau, , “United States – Pakistan Cooperation on Education,” *U.S. Department of State website*, March 4, 2006. Retrieved November 30, 2006 from <http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/fs/2006/62597.htm>.

the verbiage is there ever mention of religious education or religious curriculum. It is apparent from the initial outlay in 2002 and the subsequent increase in 2006 that the U.S government sees education reform and access as an increasingly important tool to stem terrorism and extremism, and perhaps erode the small market share of *madrassa* attendance.

Metrics thus far have been unable to discern whether these USAID/RTI efforts have had an effect in reducing militancy, intolerance, establishment of conditions that support terrorism and *jihadism*, or had any effect on *madrassa* attendance. As of 1 June 2006, the USAID website for education in Pakistan lists only quantifiable metrics such as numbers of teachers trained, number of schools refurbished or built, numbers of students benefiting from USAID programs, and other statistics.<sup>255</sup> The RTI website lists similar metrics. Given that these programs are essentially in their infancy, it is unfair to make a judgment call of success or failure in their attempts to improve public education in Pakistan and consequently decrease the propensity for militancy, extremism, and *jihadism*. These programs are only a part of the whole, which includes other economic and social programs aimed both directly and indirectly at the same objectives. However, bringing the argument back to the focus of the perceived *madrassa* problem, numerous other challenges may make any education policy emanating from the U.S. ineffective.

Pervez Hoodbhoy, a scholar at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, posited that education was historically not recognized as being as important as other government institutions in Pakistan, stating "...it fails because...it is simply not valuable or important enough to society."<sup>256</sup> This certainly bodes significant challenges for U.S. policy, which most probably assumes that education is desirable to the vast majority of Pakistanis.

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<sup>255</sup> USAID, "Education," *USAID website*, 1 June 2006. Retrieved November 30, 2006 from <http://www.usaid.gov/pk/education/index.htm>.

<sup>256</sup> Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Education and the State: Fifty years of Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, 1998, 5.

Compounding this problem is the historical Pakistani mistrust of U.S intentions, policies, and efforts in Pakistan. The pattern of engagement and withdrawal began in the 1950s when Pakistan became a favored ally after India chose nonalignment.<sup>257</sup> The alliance faltered in the 1960s, was reinvigorated briefly in 1970, and quickly disintegrated again when Pakistan developed a nuclear program.<sup>258</sup> This ebb and flow would continue and caused Pakistanis to become distrustful of American commitment and gave the perception that Washington used Pakistan like "...a condom, throwing it away when no longer needed."<sup>259</sup> Such public diplomacy challenges will not be easily overcome and will surely cast doubt on any U.S. attempts to change the Pakistani education system. This will further reduce any effect such attempts will have with regard to *madrassas*.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has had little success in gaining control of *madrassas*. Financial incentives and mandates from the Pakistani government for *madrassas* to register with the Ministry of Education have had little to no effect and remain unenforceable. The "...government has repeatedly yielded to political pressure from religious parties that openly opposed education and *madrassas* reform."<sup>260</sup> Additionally, Musharraf has no control over funding of many *madrassas* and is unlikely to gain such control as much of it is through unregulated alternative remittance systems (ARS) and direct donations. Hence, the Pakistani government has had little leverage over targeted *madrassas*. Even the U.S., with its technological edge and ability to pressure other states and systems has had limited success in interdicting or controlling ARS in the course of prosecuting the GWOT.

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<sup>257</sup> Cohen, 2004, p302.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>259</sup> Cohen, 327.

<sup>260</sup> Samina Ahmed, "Testimony of Samina Ahmed to U.S. Senate Foreign relations Committee," *International Crisis Group*, April 19, 2005. Retrieved November 15, 2006 from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3407&l=1>.

This leaves only the American policy of creating competition in the education market place to battle the *madrassas*. However, this will certainly be affected by the prestige and historical significance *madrassas* hold in Pakistani society and the tradition of sending one male child to religious service.

Lastly, if the American interest of reducing both the terrorist threat to the U.S. and the conditions that support extremism in Pakistan is best served through the education policies carried out by USAID and RTI, then why hasn't more money been allocated to the remedy? \$500 million in education outlays to Pakistan over the next five years is a sizable investment to be sure; however, it pales in comparison to other U.S. initiatives. One month of Iraq costs the U.S. approximately \$8 billion,<sup>261</sup> one F22 fighter aircraft costs over \$133 million<sup>262</sup>, and the list goes on. While this is an unfair comparison of policy with a war and a piece of technology, it does paint a picture of underinvestment in what President Bush termed a frontline state in the war on terror. Perhaps this is in recognition of the limited ability of America to influence what are internal Pakistani problems.

In summary, even if *madrassas* were the threat most Americans perceive them to be, there is largely little the U.S. can do in the short term to directly address the problem. The U.S. public education policy for Pakistan seems a logical and much-needed first step and when combined with skillful public diplomacy may have an effect much later down the road. In the short term, P.W. Singer of the Brookings Institute stated it well in saying that "in the end, reforming public education is a problem for Pakistan to solve. The U.S. can encourage and aid the Musharraf regime in its efforts, but the final decision lies beyond the scope of American powers or responsibility."<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> John P. Murtha, "Strengthen by Redeployment," *U.S. House of Representatives Website*, July 20, 2006. Retrieved December 1, 2006 from [http://www.house.gov/list/press/pa12\\_murtha/PRstrengtheniraq.html](http://www.house.gov/list/press/pa12_murtha/PRstrengtheniraq.html).

<sup>262</sup> James W. Crawley, "America's New Fighter," *Origin Media*, 2006. Retrieved December 1, 2006 from <http://originmedia.mgnetwork.com/breaking/f22raptor/>.

<sup>263</sup> Singer, 2001.



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